THE

Social Life of a Jew

IN THE TIME OF CHRIST.

Being a description of Jewish Life
from the Cradle to the Grave,
mainly drawn from contemporary Jewish sources.

By the

Rev. Khodadad E. Keith, M.A.

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TO THE MEMORY OF

JOHN RANKIN, LL.D., J.P.,

A GREAT PHILANTHROPIST AND A

GENEROUS PATRON OF SOUND LEARNING.

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Fig. 1.

A Bethlehem Married Woman.

A. Veil over her head. B. Ten Pieces of Silver. C. Girdle.

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BY THE

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Gratefully have I used :—

(*i*). The writings of Edersheim, Ginsberg, Schürer, Israel Abrahams and Friedlander ;

(*ii*.) The relevant articles in the Jewish Encyclopedia ; Jastrow's Dictionary of the Targumim, etc. ; Hasting's Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics ; Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible ; and the Encyclopædia Biblica.

(*iii*.) Some volumes of the International Critical Commentary, the Westminster Commentaries, the Cambridge Bible, the Century Bible, the Commentaries of Lightfoot and Westcott, and the Expositor's Greek Testament.

(*iv*.) Other works mentioned in the body of the book.

The quotations from the Bible are generally in the words of the Revised Versions. In order to reproduce the sense of the original text more clearly, I have occasionally translated the Old Testament passages direct from the Hebrew and have quoted the New Testament passages from Prof. Moffatt's translation.

My sincere thanks are due to the Rev. Canon Harold Dunbar Morgan, LL.D., for reading most of the MS., and making valuable suggestions ; also to the Rev. William Herbert Still, M.A., who very kindly read the chapter on "Marriage"

K.E.K.

"SELSIDE,"
WAVERTREE,
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The Social Life of a Jew.

CHAPTER I.

THE BIRTH OF A CHILD.

THE advent of a babe is an interesting event in any family, but especially in a Jewish household. Apart from the fact that the parental instinct is particularly strong in a Hebrew, the possession of several sturdy sons carried with it many domestic and social advantages, and was regarded as a religious duty and privilege.

1.—**A Domestic Blessing.** In the East, where divorce was of frequent occurrence, the wife who had become the mother of a son was hardly ever put away. On the contrary, she became the recipient of special honours and privileges, and her influence and prestige in family affairs were thereby enhanced.

> " Her children rise up, and call her blessed,
> Her husband also, and he praiseth her."
> (Prov. xxxi. 28).

Moreover, in days when old age pensions were unknown, parents of a numerous progeny could face the future without undue apprehension, being confident that in their declining days they would be provided for, and, after their demise, their family would not become extinct in Israel.

The administration of justice in the East is often in the hands of capricious and corrupt rulers, and in consequence the weak are left at the mercy of the strong. A man, however, who has several stalwart sons to defend his home, runs very little risk of being wronged by powerful

foes. Aided by such children, he can hold his own when confronted by "enemies in the gate."

> "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord:
> And the fruit of the womb is His reward.
> As arrows in the hand of a mighty man,
> So are children of youth.*
> Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them;
> They shall not be ashamed.
> When they speak with their enemies in the gate."
> (Psalm cxxvii. 3-5.)

So the ancient Hebrew did not regard children as encumbrances, but as Divine gifts, as a special mark of God's favour, and as bulwarks against the attacks of tyrants.

2.—**A Civic Boon.** Besides protecting their home and kindred, young men added also to the military strength of their town. In times of wars and feuds, the safety of a community largely depended on the able-bodied men it could arm for battle. The family which provided the largest number of warriors was deservedly treated with special honour and admiration. So, happy was the man who had "his quiver (*i.e.* house) full of them." They were as effective as arrows in the hand of a warrior.

3.—**Religious Privilege.** To have many children was a religious duty and a privilege, for upon it depended the advent of the Messiah "The Son of David will not come," says the Talmud, "until all souls stored up for earthly life have been born" (*Yeb.* 62*a*). Accordingly, pious Israelites, who were anxious for the speedy appearing of the Messiah, married young and brought up many children. The follow-

* *i.e.* Children born to a man when he is young.

ing quotations will further illustrate the religious importance of having children:

"Say not, I will not marry; but take a wife and beget sons and daughters, and contribute abundantly to the increase of population." (*Aboth of Rabbi Nathan*, ch. 3).

"Whosoever has no children is like a dead man." (*Nedarim*, 64*b*).

"Seven are excommunicated from heaven: these are: A Jew who has no wife; or who has a wife, but no children; or who has children, and does not train them in the study of the Law; who has no phylactery on his head, and none on his arm; no fringes on his garment; no M'zuzah* on his door-posts; and no shoes on his feet." (*Pesaḥim* 113b).

We can now understand why the birth of a child evoked such an interest in Israel. It was an event of paramount importance, not only to the household concerned, but also to the whole nation. No wonder then that as word went abroad that a new arrival was expected, friends and neighbours gathered around the house to sing, rejoice and invoke blessing on the infant, if a boy, and to commiserate with the father if he was so unfortunate as to be burdened with a girl!

What the Rev. G. M. Mackie says of modern customs in Palestine is fairly true of the customs in the Holy Land two thousand years ago "When a child is born," he says, "two or three local musicians are waiting outside to know if the new arrival be a boy or girl If the former, they immediately beat the drum, and play upon whatever

*The M'zuzah is a rectangular piece of parchment on which Deut. vi. 4-9, and xi. 18-21, are written, The parchment is then rolled up and placed in a wooden or metal case or tube and affixed to the upper part of the door-post on the right.

instruments they have, accompanying the din with improvised rhymes complimentary to the dignity of the family, and prophetic of the career lying before the son and heir. But the moment they learn from the silence and sad looks of the visitors that a daughter has been thrust upon the family, the drum is shouldered, and the musicians walk away" (*Bible Manners and Customs*, p. 118).

This graphic picture is in accord with a statement in the Talmud that "the birth of a male child causes universal joy . . . . but the birth of a female child causes universal sorrow" (*Niddah* 31*b*).

Bar Kapara said: "We are taught by tradition: It is impossible for the world to exist without males or without females, but happy he whose children are males, and woe unto him whose children are females" (*Baba Bathra*, 16*b*).

We must gratefully note, however, that Bar Kapara did not voice the opinion of all the Rabbis, for in the same Tractate of the Talmud we read that in a discussion over the merits of male and female children, Rab Ḥisda* said: "As for me, I prefer daughters to sons" (*B.B.* 141*a*).

Jairus's solicitude for his daughter (Mat. ix. 18) clearly shows that among the Jews a father's love for his daughter was no less ardent than his love for his son.

4.—Why Children cry at their Birth. "Two guardian angels teach the soul (of the unborn babe) Torah (law), every morning, and display the glories of the just in paradise; and in the evening hell is shown. As the memory of this

* Once Rab Ḥisda's daughter was sitting on his knee, and two of his disciples, Raba and Rami, standing before him. "Which of the two," asked the father, "wouldest thou like to marry?" "Both," was the reply. "But I shall be the second," chimed in Raba. This was eventually the case.

would interfere with free-will, the child forgets all it has seen and heard in this stage of development. The depression in the middle of the upper lip represents the stroke by which this knowledge and wisdom are made to disappear. For this reason, too, children cry when they are born "

(*Jew. Encyc.* Vol. iv. p. 27).

5.—**The Angels' Song.** We noticed above how friends and neighbours would assemble to sing and praise God at the birth of a man-child in Israel. But at the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem, strange to say, this customary religious observance was neglected. We do not read of any singing on the part of men or women. Those near by in the inn were all too engrossed with arrangements for their own comfort to take any notice of the greatest event in the history of the world. " He entered the world—the world which existed through Him—yet the world did not recognise Him : He came to what was His own, yet His own folk did not welcome Him." (John i. 10-11, *Moffatt's Translation*). But the heavenly Father under whose fostering care the Servant of Jehovah " grew up as a tender plant " (Isa liii. 2), did not allow the event to pass unnoticed, for He sent a multitude of the heavenly host to do what man had neglected. They sang and praised God saying :

" Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace,
*Good-will toward men " (Luke ii. 14).

According to another ancient custom among the Jews, on the first Sabbath after his birth, the *new* babe was visited by friends and neighbours who wished him

* Moffatt renders : " for men whom He favours."

health, and peace, and prosperity. Such a visit is known as *Shalom Zakhar*, *i.e.*, to wish "the peace or health of the male child." Intimate friends of the family presented the babe with gifts. May we not see in the homage of the Magi, and in the presentation by them of samples of the produce of their country a *Shalom Zakhar* visit on the part of the Gentiles, just as the visit of the Shepherds (*Luke* ii. 15) was a similar visit on the part of the Jews, to the Babe who was destined to be a Light to lighten the Gentiles as well as the glory of His people Israel?

CHAPTER II.

CIRCUMCISION. NAMING. REDEMPTION. PURIFICATION.

1.—Circumcision. The new babe was washed, salted and wrapped in swaddling-clothes (Ezk. xvi. 4), Male children received the "token of the covenant," by circumcision on the eighth day. The operation, was generally performed in the house by a trained man called *Mohel*, and was regarded of supreme importance. Even the Sabbath might be violated for its due performance. "Everything necessary for circumcision may be performed on the Sabbath." (*Sabbath* 133*a*, *cf.* John vii. 22).

Rabbi Meir said that circumcision "in weight was equal to all the commandments recorded in the Law." (*Nedarim*, 32*a*).

In Deut. x. 16, the spiritual aspect of circumcision is emphasized. (See also Jer. iv. 4; Rom. ii. 28-29),*

Under the influence of Hellenism, the youths of the high priestly families had abandoned the services of the Sanctuary, in order that they might "take part in the unlawful provision for the palestra." (2 *Macc.* iv. 14).

Those who took part in such gymnastic exercises, had to appear in the palestra stark naked. To conceal their Jewish origin these worldly priestlings tried to obliterate the sign of the covenant. (*Jos. Ant.* xii. v. 1;

*Occasionally, in the case of a weakly babe, circumcision proved dangerous; so the Rabbis ordained that "if the first infant and the second have died after circumcision, the mother is not to repeat the rite." (Yebam. 64b).

and 1 *Macc.* i. 15 ; *Jubilees* xv. 26-27). St. Paul condemns such practices (1 Cor. vii. 18).

2.—The Significance of Names. A Jewish boy received his name on the day he was circumcised ; whereas a girl was named at any time within a month of her birth.

Hebrew names are generally significant ; some describe physical or mental qualities, *e.g.*, Laban—" White," Barak—" lightening " ; some commemorate especial circumstances at birth (Gen. xxv. 25-26) ; some are names of animals or trees, *e.g.*, Rachel—" ewe," Jonah—" dove," Hadassah—" myrtle ," Tamar—" palm " ; some indicate the faith of the bearer of the name or of his parents, *e.g.*, Elijah—" Jehovah is God," a protest against the prevailing worship of Baal at the Court of Jezebel. Certain names suggested the feelings and hopes of the parents. Such are the names of the sons of Jacob.

Thou shalt call His name Jesus (Matt. i. 21). Sometimes a name is *prophetic*, like the name " Jesus," divinely bestowed upon our Lord. Jesus is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew " Joshua," the name borne by the successor of Moses, and means " Jehovah is salvation." It indicates the distinctive nature of Christ's mission, Christ did not come merely as a Prophet or a supreme ethical teacher or philosopher, but *par excellence* as a *Saviour*. The world had had many prophets, teachers and philosophers, but they had not succeeded in arresting the " moral stagnation and the spiritual inanition," which prevailed everywhere. " The world did not need a teacher, it required a *Saviour*, and never was a Saviour more needed than at the time He appeared. Rome is described by Renan, as a " very hell," and Antioch " a moral putrefaction " These

and other less important cities spread the moral poison throughout the provinces. If the world looked to Rome for a standard of morality, as it did for political guidance, it saw only sensuality, vile impurity, and the most heartless selfishness. Rome taught what she herself practised—the lawfulness of slavery, the worthlessness of human life, the rightfulness of infanticide. Roman virtue was simply military valour. He who could wield the sword well was pronounced a virtuous man. Immorality walked openly with a haughty mien."*

So, Christ came as the "Saviour of the world" (John iv. 42), and His religion is the Religion of Redemption, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to *save* that which was lost" (Luke ix. 10).

Moreover the *nature* of the salvation wrought by our Lord is also hinted at by His name Jesus, "*Jehovah* is salvation." It is not political (*John* 18; 36), but moral and spiritual and its author is Divine; for "no man can by any means redeem a brother, nor give to God a ranson for him" (Psalm xlix. 8). It is the Messiah alone who can deliver from the penalty, power and pollution of sin, "for it is He that shall save His people from their sins (Matt. i. 21). It is highly significant that the victorious watchword or battle-cry of the Maccabeans, fighting for religious freedom, was "The help of God," (2 *Mac.* viii. 23.) and "Victory is God's" (xiii. 15).

3.—"The Mother of Jesus" (Jn. ii. 1). Jewish ladies on their marriage did not change their maiden name. For instance, when Sarah married Abraham, she did not become "Mrs." Abraham, but "Sarah, the wife of Abraham."

*Rabbi Jesus, by William Macintosh, M.A., Ph.D. p. 205.

Sometimes, a married woman changed her name when she became the mother of a son, of whom she was particularly proud. In such a case she took the name, not of her husband, but of her son. Hence, we have "the Mother of Jesus," "Mary the mother of John whose surname is Mark." (Acts xii. 12).*

4.—**Surnames.** In the earliest times, each person had generally one significant name. Later on, in towns and large villages, where several people bore the same name, it became necessary to distinguish such individuals, and several methods were adopted to this end. The simplest one for a man was to add to his name "bar" (—son of), and the name of his father. So "Simon" became Simon-bar-Jonah — Simon the son of Jonah; *cf.* Bar-abbas—the son of Abbas; Bar-Timaeus—son of Timaeus.

Sometimes the trade or the religious party was the distinguishing element, *e.g.* Simon the tanner (Acts ix. 43); Simon Magus, the magician (Acts viii. 9); Simon the Cananæan. It does not mean a native of Canaan or of Cana in Galilee, but a "zealot" (*cf.* Luke vi. 15). Frequently a person was known by the name of the place where he was born or resided, *e.g.*, Mary Magdalene, *i.e.*, Mary of Magdala (Luke viii. 2); Judas Iscariot, *i.e.*, "man of Kerioth."

The expression "Jesus of Nazareth," does not mean that Jesus was born in Nazareth, but only that He resided there, in the same way that we speak of "Arnold of Rugby," who was born in the Isle of Wight; or of Thomas Carlyle, as

* Among the Arabs, this kind of honorific name is generally adopted by the father. For instance, a man with the name of "Omar" who becomes the father of a son called "Hassan," adopts the name Abu-Hassan, father of Hassan.

the "Philosopher of Chelsea," although he was born in Scotland.

In the Talmud (*Abud. Zar.* 27*b*) James, the brother of our Lord, is referred to as "Jacob (—James) of the village of Shekhanya" not because Shekhanya was his birth-place, but because it was his place of residence at that time.

When Palestine became bilingual, many Jews found it expedient to have a Greek name in addition to their Hebrew or Aramaic one. In some cases they translated their name into Greek; thus the Aramaic "Cephas," became Peter, and Thomas (Aramaic Te-uma)—which means "twin," became "Didymus" (John xi. 16). In other cases they chose a Greek or a Roman name which slightly resembled the Hebrew in sound but not necessarily in meaning, *e.g.*, Joshua (or Jesus) became "Jason"; Eliakim became "Alcimus"; Saul became "Paul." Probably in the same category we must place *Barnabas*, which in Acts iv. 36, is taken to mean the "son of consolation" or "exhortation." His Hebrew name therefore must have been Bar-Nahum, or Bar-Nehamah, which has been Hellenised into Barnabas.*

5.—**Redemption of the First-Born.** According to Exod. xiii. 2, all first-born in Israel, both of men and cattle, were sacred to Jehovah, but only the first-born *males* were to be transferred to Him (v. 12; *cf.* Deut. xv. 19). As the retention of every first-born son by Jehovah would have disturbed the family organisation, provision was made for the "redemption" of the son by the payment of five shekels,

* It may have been Bar-Nebuah—"son of exhortation."
Prof. Dalman ("Words of Jesus," p. 40), following Deissmann, thinks that the original form of the name was "Bar-Nebo," son of Nebo. It is highly improbable that a Jew of the first century would take as part of his name "Nebo," a Babylonian god.

about fifteen shillings (Num. xviii. 16; *cf.* Exod. xiii. 13). The dedication of the first-born, like the dedication of the first fruits of the soil, was an acknowledgment that the whole nation was Jehovah's "heritage."

The ceremony which is called in Hebrew "Pidyon hab-ben" (—Redemption of the son) was very simple, and took place not earlier than thirty-one days after the birth of the child.* Any priest could perform it. A visit to the temple was not necessary, although, when convenient, a visit was paid.

6.—The Purification after Childbirth (Lev. xii.). This took place forty days after the birth of a male child, but eighty days after that of a female child. During the period of her ceremonial uncleanness, the mother did not attend any of the services of the Sanctuary, but was free to leave her home and carry on any social engagement. At the expiration of the period of her Levitical defilement, she presented herself in the Temple with a burnt-offering and a sin-offering. The *sin-offering*, for poor and rich alike, consisted of a "young pigeon, or a turtle dove." The *burnt-offering* was to be "a lamb of the first year," with a proviso that: "If her means suffice not for a lamb, then she shall take two turtle doves or two young pigeons; the one for a burnt-offering, and the other for a sin-offering." (Lev. xii. 8).

It was an offering of this latter kind, spoken of as "poor's offering," that the Mother of our Lord made in the Temple (Luke ii. 22 and 23).

With an exquisite sense of delicacy, arrangements had been made to spare the offerer of "the poor's offering"

* It might take place later. So our Lord was presented in the Temple on the day the Virgin-Mother received her "purification."

from shame and to conceal from the curious the character of her impurity. There were placed in the Court of the Women, thirteen trumpet-shaped chests or alms-boxes, each duly labelled to specify the object for which the contributions were to be used. The money for the purchase of "Turtle-dove" would be placed in chest iii., and that for the "young pigeon" in chest iv., and at stated hours the contents of these chests would be taken out and a number of birds, corresponding to the amount contributed, would be offered.

CHAPTER III.

BAR - MITSWAH.

1.—**The Term.** The word *Bar-Mitswah* means " a son of commandment," *i.e.*, a person who has attained the age of religious maturity, and is expected to keep all the Jewish laws. Hitherto his parents had been accountable for his actions, now he himself assumes responsibility and enters upon all the privileges of an Israelite.

2.—**The Age.** In European countries, a Jewish boy becomes *Bar-Mitswah* when he completes his thirteenth year. This is probably based on a statement attributed to Yehudah ben Tema (2nd cent. A.D.), in the " Sayings of the Jewish Fathers " (v. 24) ; which reads : " at thirteen the Commandments."* The Oriental Jews, on the other hand, regard a boy as having attained his religious maturity when he has completed his twelfth year and just entered upon his thirteenth. Rabbi El-azar (2nd cent. A.D.), says : " Until the thirteenth year it is the father's duty to train his boy : after this he must say : ' Blessed be He who has taken from me the responsibility for this boy ' " (*Genesis Rabba* lxiii). This implies that as soon as the boy enters upon his thirteenth year, the father says the above benediction and thereby frees himself from any further responsibility for the moral and religious deeds of his son.

In Jerusalem, and probably in other parts of Palestine, a child of exceptional ability was admitted into some of the privileges of an adult Israelite *before* he

* See Oesterley's translation of the " Sayings," p. 73.

had actually become *Bar-Mitswah.* The passage sanctioning this practice is found in the Tractate "*Sopherim*" (18 : 5)) and reads : "In Jerusalem they are accustomed to initiate their children to fast on the Day of Atonement a year or two before their maturity ; and then, when the age has arrived, to bring the *Bar-Mitswah* before the priest or elder for blessing, encouragement and prayer, that he may be granted a portion in the Law and in the doing of good works."* It was in full conformity with this practice that our Lord, "when he was twelve years old," was taken to the feast of Passover (Luke ii. 41-49).

3.—**The Ceremony.** On the Sabbath following his thirteenth (or twelfth) birthday, the boy is called up to read in the synagogue a portion of the Law, which is the proper lesson for the day.‡ If he is a clever boy, he delivers also a discourse or an exposition based on some passage of the old Testament or the Talmud. The Rabbis present may ask him some questions arising out of his address. When he has answered them satisfactorily, the whole congregation arise and congratulate and bless him. Sometimes the discourse is delivered at a banquet arranged at home in his honour. He is then reckoned among the ten male adults necessary to form a *minyan* or quorum for holding a Public Service in the Synagogue.

4.—**The Passover in Jerusalem.** The Passover feast lasted seven days, the first and the last days of which were "holy convocation," *i.e.*, days for religious gathering, during which "no servile work" was to be done (Lev. xxiii. 5-8). The intervening five days were called "*Ḥol ham-mō-ed*," *i.e.*, "week-days of the feast" or half-holidays.

*Jewish Encycl., Vol. II., p. 510*a*.

‡I hope to publish in another volume a detailed description of the "Synagogue and its Services."

During the *Hol ham-mo-ed* the Jews could do "servile work"; they could buy, sell, travel, etc., as on week-days. This regulation applied also to the feast of Tabernacles. In the New Testament, the *Hol ham-mo-ed* is called "the midst of the feast" (John vii. 14). "To go up unto the feast," meant joining the pilgrim band, which left a town in time to arrive at Jerusalem some days *before* the feast, in order that they might "purify themselves" (John xi.55), and make all other necessary arrangements for the due observance of the *first* day of the feast, which was "holy convocation," and the only day necessary for the fulfilment of the festival law. In fact, many Israelites, having performed their religious duties on the *first* day of the feast, would return to their homes during the *Hol ham-mo-ed.** But those who had come from a distance would stay in the Holy City for a longer period, in order that they might see the places of interest and also listen to the discourses of some of the famous Rabbis. The members of the Sanhedrin, which on ordinary days met at the "Hall of Hewn Stone,"† on Sabbaths and on Festivals removed to the Terrace ("*Hel*" in Hebrew), which surrounded the Court of the Women, and delivered public discourses. The

* When our Lord told his unbelieving brethren that He was not "going up unto the feast" of Tabernacles (John vii. 8), and yet He went up into the Temple "in the midst of the feast" (v. 14), we need not assume, as some commentators do, that He altered His plan owing to some new and sufficiently strong motives. His brethren would take His words to mean that He did not intend accompanying the pilgrim-band and going through all the preparations with a view to presenting Himself in the Temple on the *first* day of the feast. His words did by no means exclude the possibility of His going up to Jerusalem during the *Hol ham-mo-ed*.

† In Hebrew, *Lishkath haggazith*, because its floor was paved with hewn square stones (Yoma, 25*a*). This Hall was built by Simon ben Shetah (B.C. 110-65), on the south side of the Court of the Priests and extended to the Court of Israel.

general public had utmost freedom to take part in these discourses.

It was at one of these public meetings, held on the Terrace of the Temple, during the feast, that the Boy Jesus was found, "sitting in the midst of the doctors (or 'teachers'), both hearing them, and asking them questions: and all that heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers" (Luke ii. 46-47).

5.—**The Visit of Jesus to Jerusalem.** With the above observations as a background, let us now try and get a clear idea of all the circumstances which attended the visit of the Boy Jesus to the Temple. As the narrative preserved for us by St. Luke is the only authentic account we possess of the Boyhood of the Master, every detail of it is precious, and we are justified in devoting a somewhat larger space to it.

Some days before the Passover,* a large caravan of pilgrims, from various towns and villages in Galilee, would start for Jerusalem. Joseph and Mary accompanied by Jesus, when twelve years old, would join this caravan and reach the Holy City about a week before the feast. Having chosen the paschal lamb on the tenth day of the month Nissan, each family or group of families would offer it in the Temple, on the fourteenth day of the same month, about three o'clock in the afternoon. The flesh of the lamb, together with unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and *haroseth* (*i.e.*, the 'sop'), would be partaken of at the Passover meal in the house. While at table they would go through

*For a full account, see the writer's booklet "Passover in the Time of Christ," which may be obtained from C.M.J., 16, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, W. C. 2. Paper cover, 8d., stiff cover, 1/-.

a whole service consisting of the story of the redemption from Egypt, the Hallel Psalms and hymns.

On the following day, the 15th of Nissan, they would attend the service in the Temple. They would probably stay one or two days longer, but this was not essential. Then during the *Hol ham-mo-ed*, a large number of the pilgrims from the Holy Land would pay a final visit to the Temple and start on their journey home.* A band of sturdy young men would go in front to make arrangements for the first halting-place. Then would follow the women, some riding on donkeys, others going on foot and getting an occasional lift. The men folk would bring up the rear. The roads were all in good condition, for the Sanhedrin had sent workmen a month before the feast, to repair the roads and the bridges for the convenience of the pilgrims. The roads were also quite safe from robbers, for at that season there was a constant stream of people in all the highways. A spirit of amity and goodwill reigned among all who had lately worshipped the God and Father of them all. The little children are usually with their mothers, and young lads with either father or mother. Mary fancied that Jesus was with Joseph and Joseph thought that He was with Mary. At any rate, there was no question of neglect; both had perfect confidence in the wisdom and prudence of the Child. He might be among His kinsfolk or acquaintances. In the evening, they would all meet at the appointed halting-place. But when the caravan halted at the end of the first day's march, no trace of the Child was to be found.

* The expression " when they had fulfilled the days " (Luke ii., 43), refers only to the days necessary for offering the Paschal lamb, eating the Passover meal and attending the Temple service on the *first* day of the Feast.

6.—Jesus sitting in the midst of the doctors. Having searched for Him in every band of fellow-travellers without success, they hastened back to Jerusalem, and on the third day " found Him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors " (or " teachers "). The Feast was not yet over, and so the teachers were still imparting public instructions on the Terrace of the Temple. Had the Feast been over, the doctors would have been in the Hall of Hewn Stones, and the general public could not freely take part in their discussion. Our Lord was genuinely interested in what the teachers, who sat in Moses' seat, were teaching. He both listened to them and asked them questions ; not indeed to confound them by His superior wisdom, but probably to understand their religious ideals, their Messianic expectations, and their method of teaching.

The teachers of the Law sat on raised seats, and the public sat on the ground, " at their feet " (Acts. xxii. 3), but here we read that our Lord was sitting " in the midst of the doctors," evidently on one of the raised seats reserved for the teachers. Was it due to the fact that the doctors were so profoundly impressed by the unearthly wisdom of the Child that they offered Him a seat in their midst ? This is not impossible, for we read of a similar case in the Talmud.* One day Rabban Shimeon ben Gamaliel II. (about 150 A.D.) and Rabbi Joshua ben Qorha were seated in the Academy on stools, and two children, who later on became famous Rabbis, " sat before them on the ground, asking questions and starting objections." The other Rabbis were so impressed by the children that they exclaimed : " We drink of their water, and yet they sit upon the ground ! " Upon this, " seats were brought in and the two children were seated upon them."

******Baba Metzia* **84*b*, near the end.**

" What would those grave and venerable teachers, as they marvelled at His understanding and answers, have felt, had it been revealed to them Who that wondrous Child really was ? ' Therefore,' says old Euthymius, ' let us that are teachers fear, recognising that in our midst is the Christ, attending how we teach.' "

7.—**In His Father's House.** Finding the Child seated in the midst of the religious leaders of the nation, Joseph and Mary " were astonished : and His mother said unto Him, ' Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us ? Behold, Thy father and I have been looking for Thee anxiously ' " (Luke ii. 48). " Wondrous things had happened to the Holy Child during the Passover-week," says Prof. David Smith.* " God had spoken to His soul and discovered to Him Who He was and wherefore He had come into the world." " Why is it," Jesus replied wistfully, " that you are seeking Me ? Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house ? " On this Dr. Plummer† remarks : " There is a gentle but decisive correction of His Mother's words, ' Thy *father* and I ' in the reply, ' Where should a Child be but in his father's house ? and My Father is God.' " The claims of His Divine Father are paramount. These are the earliest recorded sayings of our Lord and strike the key-note of all His earthly ministry. His one absorbing concern is to do the will of Him that sent Him. How much of our lives is wasted and how much of our time is frittered away because we fail to realize our vocation in life ! We close this section with a wise saying of Rabbi Tarphon.‡

* " The Days of His Flesh," p. 23.

† Inter. Crit. Commentary on St. Luke, p. 77.

‡ He is supposed to have been the Trypho of Justin Martyr's Dialogues. He died early in the second century.

"The day is short (*cf.* John ix. 4), and the work is great, and the labourers are sluggish, and the hire is abundant, and the Master of the house (*i.e.*, God, *cf.* Matt. ix. 37; xx. 1) is urgent." (Sayings of Jewish Fathers, Oesterley's translation, p. 27).

CHAPTER IV.

GAMES AND SPORTS IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES.

1.—Public Games. Of organised public games there is no mention in the Old Testament. The nearest approach to it being probably the incident recorded in 2 Sam. ii. 12-16. Abner, the champion of the cause of Saul, met Joab, the devoted general of David, at Gibeon, and Abner proposed: "Let the young men . . arise and play before us"; Joab replied: "Let them arise." Twelve champions from each side then engaged in a combat. Whether the original intention was a sort of tournament and display of valour, or a prelude to a serious battle, the result was disastrous.

Although the Hebrews had no public games like those of ancient Greece, they had the three great annual festivals, the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, for the observance of which they had "to appear before the Lord" at the central Sanctuary. There they met their brethren for social intercourse and united worship. The law emphasised the duty of rejoicing before the Lord (*Deut.* xvi. 11, 14, 15), and lest the "rejoicing" should degenerate into a mere selfish indulgence, the Israelite was commanded to consider also the needs of others and to provide for the rejoicing of his man-servant, maid-servant, the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow (Deut. xvi. 11).

2.—Riddles and Story-telling. A favourite diversion at festivities and wedding parties was story-telling and pro, pounding and solving of riddles. As examples of the latter-

we have the riddles of Samson (Judges xiv. 12-14); of Ezekiel (xvii. 1-10) and "the hard questions" with which the Queen of Sheba "tested" Solomon (1 Kings x. 1).*

Another form of pastime among the Hebrews must have been story-telling, as among the Arabs. The prophets seem to have made good use of such opportunities in order to deliver to the people the Divine Message. Jeremiah, for instance, by Divine command, dictated some of his former prophecies to Baruch, and told Baruch to take the roll and read it "in the ears of the people, in the Lord's house upon the feast day" (Jer. xxxvi. 1-8).

Similarly Amos delivered some of his scathing denunciations against social sins at the Royal Chapel in Bethel, where he was assured of a good audience (Amos v. 18-24, and vii. 10-15).

Isaiah's song of the Vineyard of the Lord (Isa. v. 1-7), also shows every indication of having been sung or recited before a public audience, just as a story-teller recites his story in an Oriental bazaar to-day.

3.—Allusions to various Sports.

(*a*) HUNTING, although familiar to the Hebrews, was not a favourite pursuit with them, owing to their peculiar dietary laws. It was *Ishmael* who became an "archer" (Gen. xxi. 20); and *Esau* who was an "expert hunter" (Gen. xxv. 27), not Isaac or Jacob. Harts, gazelles and roebucks were regarded clean for food and

* Riddles abound in the writings ol the Rabbis. One example will suffice: "Without movement while living, it moves when its head is cut off." The answer is "a tree, which when its top is removed, can be made into a moving ship." Jew. Encycl, vol. x., p. 408 b bottom).

formed part of the daily provision for King Solomon's table (1 Kings iv. 23, *cf.* Lev. xvii. 13; 1 Sam. xxvi. 20: "partridges"). To secure these, men used bows and arrows (Gen. xxvii. 3), slings (Job xli. 28; 1 Sam. xvii. 40); nets (Isa li. 20); traps (Amos iii. 5); pits (2 Sam. xxiii. 20); snares and decoys (Eccus. xxvii. 20; xi. 30). Josephus mentions hunting dogs (Ant. iv., viii. 9) and tells us that Herod the Great was a mighty hunter (Ant. xv., vii. 7). According to the Rabbinic Law, "a hunter who captures a lion on the Sabbath is not guilty of desecrating the day of rest" (*Shab.* 106*b*.). "Hunters and fishermen who have captured animals forbidden as food to Jews, may sell them to Gentiles" (*Pesaḥim*, 23*a*). "Moles and rats may be hunted for in the usual way, on annual festivals, in fields and orchards" (*Moed Qaton.* 6*b*).

(*b*) SLINGING was an improved stone-throwing, practised by children in every country. In the early days the sling was used as a weapon in war (2 Chron. xxvi. 14). The Benjamites were skilful slingers and could use their left hand as effectively as their right (*cf.* Judges xx. 16; with 1 Chron. xii. 2). This weapon is still used by Syrian shepherds as a protection against wild animals, and by agriculturists, to drive away birds. No doubt, Jewish children amused themselves with the sling as modern children do in Palestine to-day.

(*c*) BALL is mentioned in Isaiah xxii. 18, which should be rendered: "He will roll thee up in a roll (and toss thee) like a ball into a spacious land."

(*d*) SWIMMING is referred to in Isaiah xxv 11, and in Acts xxvii. 43. One Rabbi suggested that it was the duty of the parents to teach their children the art of swimming.

(*e*) PLAYING WITH LIVING CREATURES is alluded to in Job xli. 5. This sometimes led to professional pigeon-flying and gambling, so the Rabbis discouraged it. "Dice-players, usurers and pigeon-fliers" were not admissible as witnesses for the appearing of the moon. (*Rosh-Hashanah* 22*a*).

(*f*) DANCING as a spontaneous expression of joy was common among the ancient Hebrews, both at religious (Psalm xxx. 11) and at family gatherings (Lk. xv. 25), but I have not come across any evidence of *mixed* dancing in Bible times. Women danced by themselves and men by themselves. We are told that Rabbi Yehudah ben Illai used to dance at weddings, waving a myrtle-branch (*Kethubah* 17*a*).

(*g*) MARRIAGE DANCE. On two days in the year, namely, on the evening of the Day of Atonement and on the Festival of the Offering of Wood for the Temple use*, the maidens of Jerusalem, rich and poor, used to repair to the vineyards, wearing borrowed white dresses, in order not to humiliate those who had none of their own. There they danced and sang, addressing the male spectators: "Young men, take care what choice you make." The pretty ones among them used to say: "Choose beauty; for beauty is the only recommendation in women." Those who belonged to distinguished

* This took place on the 15th of the month Ab, about mid-summer.

families used to say: "Turn your eyes to noble parentage; for woman is the preserver of family pride." Those who could boast of neither beauty nor noble birth, sang: "Grace is deceitful and beauty is vain: but the woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised" (*Ta'anith* 31*a* and 26*b*).

This seems to have been the survival of marriage by capture (Judges xxi. 21).

(*h*) JUGGLERY. On the Festival of the Drawing of Water, which took place on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, in the evening, huge crowds would assemble in the Court of the Women which was brilliantly illuminated, and would spend the whole night there in singing and dancing and other forms of merry-making. The Rabbis said: "Whoever has not witnessed the rejoicing of the Festival of Water Drawing, has seen no rejoicings in his life . . Golden candlesticks were there . . . Holy men, and men given to good works, holding lighted torches in their hands, used to dance before the candlesticks, singing words of praise." "Rabbi Simeon, the son of Gamaliel (who is mentioned in the Acts), used to throw up eight torches into the air and catch them alternately, without one coming into contact with the other." Other Rabbis performed similar feats with knives, or cups of wine, or eggs (*Sukkah* 51*a* and 53*a*).

4.—Allusion to other forms of Pastimes. We read of foot-racing (Psalm xix 5), jumping (Psalm xviii. 29), and playing with nuts. In this last form of diversion, women also seem to have indulged, for the Rabbinic law decrees

that " a woman may not play with nuts on the Sabbath " (*Erubin* 104*a*). It is quite possible that nuts were used in a somewhat similar way as marbles are used by present day children. Jerome (4th century) relates in his commentary on Zechariah xii. 3, that, he saw " large heavy stones which Jewish boys and youths handled and held aloft in the air to develop their muscular strength."

CHAPTER V.

GAMES IN THE GRÆCO-ROMAN WORLD.

1.—Græco-Roman Games. In the Græco-Roman world, public games were generally associated with religious rites, and such games were often celebrated in the provincial towns in honour of the emperor. In order to ingratiate himself with Augustus, Herod had built in Jerusalem, a theatre and an amphitheatre, and had instituted such games every four years. According to Schürer these games were of four kinds :

(*i*) Chariot racing in the *Circus* or *Hippodrome* ;

(*ii.*) Gladiatorial contests and fights of wild beasts in the *Amphitheatre* ;

(*iii.*) Plays and pantomimes in the *Theatre.*

(*iv.*) Gymnastic games, such as boxing, wrestling and running in the *Stadium* ;

Josephus describes such games as " foreign to Jewish customs " (*Ant.* xv. 8, 1), and they were detested by the pious Jews, because they were closely connected with heathen religion and were practised naked (1 *Mac.* i. 14, 15).

A devout Rabbi would thank God for having cast his lot " in the house of learning and the house of prayer," and not " in theatres and circuses."

2.—Allusions to Games in the Gospels. PLAYING IN THE MARKET PLACE. Children readily imitate the doings of their elders ; and a favourite game with the Jewish

children was playing at marriages and funerals. A number of them would gather in the market-place. One would suggest playing at a marriage procession, and producing a pipe (or a simple reed) would play it, expecting his companions to leap and dance. When they had enough of this, someone would propose a game of make-believe funerals, and forthwith would imitate the loud wailing of Oriental mourners, expecting his playmates to chime in with the doleful cry and to beat their breasts. Sometimes in a group of little children some are sulky and peevish, so that nothing will satisfy them, and they sit in a corner and grumble. In Matt. xi. 16-19, our Lord compares the Jewish formalists of His time to such sulky and peevish children. John-the-Baptist came, living an abstemious life and preaching a stern and mournful doctrine, and saying: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"; and the cantankerous and self-opinioned section of the community would have nothing to do with him, for he seemed crazy. The Son of Man came, taking part in the social life of man—and thereby showing that "the common life of all men could be lived with perfect holiness"—and preaching the joyful news of the Kingdom of God, and offering to give rest to "all that labour and are heavy laden" (Matt. xi. 28), but the leaders of the nation remained unresponsive. They said He was "a friend of publicans and sinners." However contemptuously they meant it, the statement was perfectly true, and the Saviour's attitude towards "publicans and sinners" has come now to be regarded as one of the brightest jewels in His crown. In their resentment at His attitude, the Jews added an epithet which was as false as it was abusive, when they hurled at Him the opprobrious phrase "a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber." And yet wisdom is

justified* of (*i.e.* at the hand of) her children." This difficult sentence means that amongst those who listened to the preaching of the Baptist and of the Messiah, there were some who were "children" of Divine "Wisdom," "whose souls were lighted with wisdom from on high." These "welcomed both the Forerunner and the Messiah, recognising that each of them had been sent by the Divine Wisdom, and were under its guidance in adopting different manners of life and of action."†

Certain important MSS. read "works" for "children," a reading which is adopted in the Revised Version. In that case, the phrase means that the methods adopted by John and by our Lord, being in accordance with Divine Wisdom, are justified (*i.e.*, proved to be right) by their result.

3.—Allusions to Games in the Epistles and Acts. We have already described the children's game in the market place, referred to in St. Matthew's Gospel. In the rest of the New Testament all the chief allusions to athletic games are found in the writings of St. Paul and in the Epistle to the Hebrews. St. Paul in his missionary travels throughout the Roman Empire, could not help witnessing the keen excitement which athletic contests created in all the Grecian cities. With his characteristic power of "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 5), the Apostle makes effective use of these contests as an illustration of the Christian life. His favourite illustration is "running" or foot-race, and in one of his earliest extant Epistles he asks the Thessalonian Christians to pray for him and his fellow-missionaries "that the word of the Lord

* "Justified" means "proved right."

† Plummer's Com. on St. Matthew, p. 163.

may *run* and be glorified," or as Moffatt renders it " may speed on and triumph " (2 Thess. iii. 1).

He uses the same imagery in his last letter when he says : " I have fought the good fight ; I have run my course ; I have kept the faith," and with confidence he looks forward to " the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge," shall give him (2 Tim. iv. 7-8). It is interesting to note that the most sustained application of the metaphor is found in one of the Epistles to the Church in Corinth, in the neighbourhood of which the famous Isthmian games were celebrated every two years. Let us notice now the allusions to the details of the foot-race.

(*a*) TRAINING for the contest (1 Cor. ix. 25). " Every man that striveth in the games is temperate in all things," or " Every athlete practices self-restraint all round " (*Moffatt's translation*).

(*b*) THE RACE-COURSE (1 Cor. ix. 24). " Know ye not that they which run in a race (or ' race-course ') run all, but one receiveth the prize ? "

(*c*) THE HERALD'S SUMMONS TO THE CONTEST (1 Cor. ix. 27) " Lest by any means, after that I have preached to others (*i.e.*, called others to the contest), I myself should be rejected," *i.e.*," driven in disgrace from the games as not having contended in accordance with the rules."

(*d*) THE STRIPPING FOR THE RACE (Heb. xii. 1). " Laying aside every encumbrance (or ' handicap ') and the sin that hampers us."

(*e*) MAKING STRAIGHT FOR THE GOAL (Heb. xii. 2). " Looking (away from everything else) unto Jesus." (comp. Philip iii. 14.)

(*f*) THE NEED OF PATIENT ENDURANCE OR STAYING POWER (Heb. xii. 1.). "Let us run with patience (*i.e.*, 'endurance' or 'steadily') the race that is set before us."

(*g*) THE JOY OF VICTORY (Acts xx. 24). "I set no value on my life as compared with the joy of finishing my course and fulfilling the commission I received from the Lord Jesus to attest the gospel of the grace of God" (*Moffatt's translation*).

(*h*) THE PRIZE AWARDED TO THE VICTOR (1 Cor. ix. 25). The victor in a race received a fading wreath or crown of olive or pine, but the Apostle looks forward to an unfading crown, the crown of righteousness (2 Tim. ii. 5; iv. 8).

(*i*) THE SPECTATORS sitting round the Stadium (or racecourse) on seats rising tier upon tier (Heb. xii. 1; 1 Cor. iv. 9). "Seeing we are compassed about (or 'encircled') with so great a cloud of witnesses." "A cloud is used in all languages, for a dense mass of living beings, from the time of Homer downward" (*Westcott*).

(*j*) THE JUDGE WHO AWARDS THE PRIZE (Philip iii. 14). AND DISQUALIFIES DISHONOURABLE COMPETITORS (1 Cor. ix. 27). "I buffet my body and lead it along as a bond-servant; lest by any means, after that I have preached to (or 'heralded') others, I myself should be rejected (or 'disqualified'). There was a 'herald' at the games who summoned the competitors and taught them the conditions of the contest and disqualified those who did not observe the rules."*

* For the classification of the details of the foot race, I am mainly indebted to the Rev. A. F. Findlay's article "Games" in the Temple Dictionary of the Bible, and to Dr. Plummer's First Epistle to the Corinthians.

In addition to the foot-race, there is a reference to *boxing*, " so fight I, as not beating the air " (1 Cor. ix. 26). As Dr. Plummer puts it : " St. Paul uses his fists as one in deadly earnest, and does not miss, he plants his blow."

In 1 Cor. xv. 32, we read : " What would it avail me that, humanly speaking, I ' fought with wild beasts ' at Ephesus ? " This is generally taken as referring to the *venationes* or contests in which trained men (*bestiarii* or *venatores*) fought with wild beasts. But since St. Paul was a Roman citizen, " he could not be compelled to fight as a *bestiarius* or *venator* in the arena, nor could he be flung as a criminal *ad leones*. He means that he was near being torn to pieces by infuriated men " (*Plummer*).

4.—The Apocryphal Gospel of Thomas gives a fanciful account of the wonders and miracles performed by our Lord, as a little boy. As St. John ii. 11 speaks of Christ's miracle in Cana of Galilee as the " *beginning* of His signs," we may rest confident that all the alleged miracles of His childhood are fictitious. Nevertheless the book gives us an interesting account of children's games in the early days of Christianity. It tells us that the child Jesus, when five years old, " having made some soft clay, fashioned out of it twelve sparrows." This was on a Sabbath day and some Jews seeing it went and told Joseph. Joseph " cried out to Him, saying : ' Wherefore doest thou on the Sabbath what it is not lawful to do ? ' And Jesus clapped His hands, and cried out to the sparrows, and said to them : ' Off you go ! ' And the sparrows flew, and went off crying." In another place, we are told that " Jesus was playing in an upper room of a certain house, and one of the children that were playing with Him fell down from the house and was killed." The parents of the dead child reproached Jesus. " And Jesus

leaped down from the roof, and stood beside the body of the child and cried with a loud voice and said : ' Zeno—for that was his name—stand up, and tell me : did I throw thee down ?' And he stood up immediately, and said : ' Certainly not, my Lord, thou didst not throw me down, but hast raised me up.' " Such puerile and grotesque miracles of the apocryphal Gospels contrast glaringly with the sober and dignified miracles of the Canonical Gospels, which are instinct with moral and spiritual issues.

CHAPTER VI.

ART OF WRITING AMONG THE HEBREWS.

1.—In the Mosaic Age. Both the Babylonians and the Egyptians practised the art of writing more than three thousand years before the birth of Christ. The ancestor of the Hebrews came from "Ur of the Chaldees" (Gen. xi. 28), which was a part of Babylonia, and his descendants were sojourners in Egypt for many generations. We may therefore infer that the ancient Hebrews were not unacquainted with the art of writing. Our inference becomes a certainty when we come to examine carefully the account of the treatment of the Israelites in Egypt, for we read in the fifth chapter of Exodus that the Egyptian "taskmasters" (*i.e.*, superintendents of the labour-gang) had appointed "petty officers" from among the Hebrews "whose duties of general superintendence probably included that of keeping written accounts of the work done, and of marking the daily attendance of labourers."*

The Hebrew word translated "officers," is *shoterim*, which means "writers," "scribes," and so it is rendered in the Septuagint. This is significant, for it shows that in Egypt there were at least a sufficient number of Israelites who could write. The inference is further confirmed by Exodus xxiv. 4, where we read that "Moses *wrote* all the words of the Lord," which he had first communicated to the people by word of mouth. Not only could Moses read and write, but he took it for granted that at least a fair number of the Hebrews could read also, for he instructed the people to

*McNeil's Exodus, p. 31.

take large stones, on their arrival in Canaan, and "to plaster them with plaster" (*i.e.*, put a layer of lime or gypsum over them), and write on them "very clearly" all the words of the law. Evidently such stones would be placed in some public place, so that all the people might read them (Deut. xxvii. 1-8). This injunction of the Law-giver was implicitly carried out by Joshua after the capture of Jericho and Ai. "Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord, the God of Israel, in Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the Lord commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the Law of Moses . . . . And he wrote there upon the stones a copy (or duplicate) of the Law of Moses, which he wrote before the children of Israel" (Josh. viii. 30-32).

2.—**In Canaan—Tel-el-Amarna Tablets.** In 1887, a peasant woman, searching among the ruins of *Tel-el-Amarna*, about 170 miles south of Cairo, for some curios to sell to the tourists. came upon a crumbling wooden chest containing over 300 clay tablets with writings on both sides. Not knowing the value of her find, she disposed of her interest to native dealers for about a couple of shillings. After many vicissitudes, most of these tablets found their way into the British Museum and the Museums at Berlin and at Cairo. Some were irretrivably lost and many were badly damaged. These tablets are exceedingly valuable, being the contemporary records of the reigns of Amenhotep III. (1410-1375 B.C.) and Amenhotep IV. (1375-1360 B.C.), the father-in-law of Tut-Ankh-Amen. These tablets are the actual correspondence between the petty kings of Palestine and the two kings of Egypt, who were at that time the rulers of Palestine. Contrary to all expectations, these tablets were written not in the Egyptian

language and writing (Hieroglyphic) but in the Babylonian language and Babylonian script (Cuneiform). This proved conclusively that just before the Israelites settled in Canaan, the art of writing was well known in that country, and the language spoken there was Babylonian, *i.e.*, a language akin to Hebrew. So when the Hebrew Patriarchs travelled in Canaan, they could freely converse with the inhabitants without an interpreter. Some scholars, however, would not admit this, saying that Babylonian was only the diplomatic tongue of the period, just as French is to-day. The excavations carried out at *Taanach* (Judges v. 19), by Professor Sellin, have removed their objection. He discovered, in a clay receptacle, the *archives* of the local king, Ishtarwashur. These letters are written in the cuneiform script and Babylonian language, and are of the same date as the *Tel-el-Amarna* Tablets. "The letters of **Ishtarwashur,**" says Professor Kittel,* "are not political, and were not written to foreigners in Babylonia or Egypt, but were sent to his near neighbours, dwelling only a few hours' journey away, and dealing with the most commonplace matters, concerning cattle, soldiers, servants, and the like. This means that not only matters pertaining to international commerce and trade, but also every day affairs, were discussed in the Babylonian language, and were to a very great extent influenced by Babylonian ideals and civilization." We may now feel absolutely confident that the art of writing was known and practised in Canaan when the Hebrews invaded it.

3.—**In the Times of the Judges.** GIDEON, some two centuries after, when pursuing Zebah and Zalmunnah,

* The Scientific Study of the Old Testament, pp. 46-48.

the Kings of Midian, requested the men of Succoth and the people of Penuel to give some food for his three hundred followers, who, though faint, were yet pursuing the raiders. Being derisively refused, Gideon vowed vengeance, and on his victorious return, he "caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and inquired of him: and he *wrote down* (wrongly rendered in the A.V. " described unto") for him the princes (*i.e.*, officials) of Succoth and the elders thereof, seventy and seven men " (Judges viii. 14).

We need not exaggerate the importance of this remarkable incident to the extent of asserting that *every* Jewish youth in that early time could read and write ; but, on the other hand, we must not minimise its significance. A Hebrew lad, an inhabitant of a small town, met by chance, is able to *write down* the names of the officials of his town ! Surely the art of writing among the Hebrews must have made in that age very striking progress. The conclusion to be drawn from the above facts is that the assertion frequently made to the effect that *all* the ancient Hebrews were nomads and devoid of all culture is not justified by the verdict of sober history.

4.—**In the Times of the Kings.** We ought to consider here one or two other instances, showing the keen interest that certain Jewish Kings took in the instruction and training of their subjects. King JEHOSHAPHAT, in the third year of his reign (870 B.C.) appointed a commission, consisting of princes (these were laymen), Levites and priests, to go " through all the cities of Judah " and teach among the people. They carried with them the Law of the Lord (2 Chron. xvii. 7-9, *cf.* xxv. 3 ; Neh. viii. 9).

Moreover, according to 1 Chron. xxv. 7-8, the **musical training** of the Levites was not neglected. There were

accomplished musicians who imparted instruction to their pupils or scholars (see also 1 Chron. xv. 22).

KING HEZEKIAH (719-690 B.C.), paid special attention to the intellectual culture of his people, and appointed a number of learned men to collect and edit literary productions (Prov. xxv. 1).

In the early days of the nation's history, the moral and religious education of the child devolved on the parents, especially the father (Deut. iv. 9 ; vi. 7 ; xi. 19 ; xxxii. 46. Psalm lxxviii. 3-6).* The foundation or " the chief part " of all knowledge was the fear of the Lord (Prov. i. 7, R.V.). " A wise son maketh a glad father " (Prov. x. 1). Corporal punishment was legitimate (Prov. xiii. 24), but it was to be administered with moderation (xix. 18). Moral suasion, however, was regarded as more efficacious in the case of an intelligent child (xvii. 10).

5.—After the Exile. On their return from the Exile, the Jews entered upon a solemn covenant to keep the Law of their God. This fact gave a new impulse to the whole problem of education. Every pious Jew naturally wanted to know the Law which he had promised to keep, and this necessitated an extension of the circle of those who could read, as well as a wide circulation of the copies of the Law. Ezra, who was both a priest and a " ready scribe " (Ezra vii. 6), took steps to supply these demands (Ezra viii. 16).

RABBI SHIMEON BEN SHETAH, who was the president of the Sanhedrin about 100 B.C., and was a brother of Queen Alexandra (Salome), decreed that " the children should attend the elementary school," thus making school attendance compulsory.

* Princes and wealthy parents employed " guardians " (2 Kings x. 1), *ōmenim* in Hebrew.

Rabbi Joshua ben Gamla (or Gamaliel), who officiated as High Priest in 64 A.D., greatly extended the school system. Of this Rabbi it is said: "But for him, the Law would have been forgotten by Israel. At first each father used to teach his own children; consequently orphans were neglected. Hence schools were established at Jerusalem; but even then the fatherless had no one to take them up to Jerusalem. So schools were opened in the large provincial towns and pupils were admitted at the age of sixteen years. Joshua ben Gamla, however, went beyond this, for he established schools in every town, and reduced the age of admission to six years" (*Baba Bathra*, fol. 21*a*).

Every place which had 25 boys of school age was bound to provide a teacher for them. An assistant teacher was added if the number of children reached forty.

The Talmud has no less than *eleven* different names for the school, which is eloquent witness to the great progress that education must have made among the Hebrews. We need not examine these designations separately, as it will be enough for our purpose to discuss these places of education under two headings, viz. (*i.*) the elementary school and (*ii.*) the high school or academy.

CHAPTER VII.

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES.

1. **The Elementary School,** was called *Beth Ha-sepher,* or " the House of the Book," for there the *written Scripture,* and especially the Book of the Law, was the text-book used. Theoretically an elementary school could not be built in a very densely crowded place (*Pesahim* 112*a*), lest it should adversely affect the health of the pupils, nor near a river which was to be crossed by an insecure bridge (*Baba Bathra,* 21).

The **Hazzan** (the " attendant " or " minister " of Luke iv. 20), usually performed the duties of the teacher. His salary was paid by the congregation, and he was not allowed to accept fees from his pupils lest he should show them favouritism. He was required to be a married man, of good repute and even-tempered. " An irritable man cannot teach," said Hillel (*Pirqé Aboth* ii. 6). Everyone who occupied this position was warned not to make any promise which he could not fulfil.

The extraordinary importance attached to the education of children is shown by the following quotations :—

" The world is upheld by the breath of the children in the school-house."

" A town in which there is no school must perish." " Jerusalem was destroyed because the education of children was neglected " (*Sabbath* 119, b).

" Dearer to Me," God is pictured as saying, " is the breath of the school children than the savour of sacrifices " (*Qoheleth Rabba*).

The testimonies of **Josephus** and of Philo are not less remarkable. Josephus writes: "Our principal care of all is this, to educate our children well" (*Apion* I. 12). **Philo** boasts that Jewish children are taught religion in "their very swaddling-clothes" (*Ad Caium* 16). Compare St. Paul's words to Timothy: "From a child (or 'babe') thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. iii. 15).

2.—**Subjects of Instruction.** As soon as the children had learned to read they were given small parchment rolls containing:

(*a*) The SHEMA [="hear"] Deut. vi. 4-9; xi. 13-21; Num. xv. 37-41.
(*b*) HALLEL, *i.e.* Psalms cxiii.-cxviii.*
(*c*) The Story of the Creation, Genesis i.-v.
(*d*) Leviticus i.-viii.

Before entering the school-room, the children would remove their shoes off their feet, but would keep their hats on. Having saluted their teacher, they would take their seats in a semi-circle facing him, so that they could all see and hear him. The teacher would read a verse and the children would repeat it until they knew it by heart. Thus, early in their youth, they began to cultivate their memory so that their power of memorising sometimes became prodigious. For instance, Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai, says that one of his pupils, Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, was like "a well-plastered cistern, which loses not a drop" (*Aboth* ii. 10).

* It will be noted that the Hebrew word "Hosanna" (meaning "save, we beseech thee"), with which the Jewish children acclaimed our Lord in the Temple (Matt. xxi. 15), comes from Psalm cxviii. 25; see also Matt. xxi. 9; Mark xi. 9; John xii. 13.

"Rabbi Meïr once went to regulate the Calendar in Asya, where there was no book of Esther. He wrote out one from memory and read it during the feast" (Megillah 18*b*).

When we bear in mind the fact that the contents of the Talmud, for many generations, were not written but were handed down orally, we need not wonder if the Evangelists could remember the very words uttered by our Lord.

Eventually most of the children would be able to recite the above passages from memory, and at least every child would commit to memory the following:—

(*a*) "Hear, O Israel: the Lord [is] our God, the Lord is one" (Deut. vi. 4).

(*b*) "Moses commanded us a Law, an inheritance for the assembly of Jacob" (Deut. xxxiii. 4).

(*c*) A personal text out of the Old Testament. Each child would find in the Hebrew Bible a text of which the initial and the final letters would correspond to the initial and final letters of his own name. For instance, if a boy was called "Abner," and he had to choose his personal text out of the English Bible instead of the Hebrew, a verse like this would be his appropriate text:

"A soft answer turneth away wrath:
But a grievous word stirreth up anger.
(Prov. xv. 1.)

The initial letter of this verse is *A* and the final letter is *r*, as in "Abner," and the verse contains all the letters found in "Abner."

The Elementary Schools were for children under the age of thirteen, and the subject taught in them was the text of the Old Testament called *Miqra*. Besides the elementary schools there were high schools or academies, devoted to the study of the *oral traditions* of the Elders. Let us now consider these.

3.—An Academy or Beth-Hammidrash* was the place where students of the Law assembled to listen to or to discuss a "Midrash," *i.e.*, a "discourse," or an "exposition," or a "comment" on some points of the Law. The teacher sat on an elevated seat and the disciples sat on the floor at his feet, just as Saul of Tarsus did, sitting "at the feet of Gamaliel" (Acts xxii. 3, *cf.* Luke x. 39). In the first century we read of chairs or stools being provided for the scholars, or probably the scholars provided themselves with such seats (*Berakhoth* 28*a*). It was owing to this fact that the academy came to be called "*Yeshîbah*—['seat'] just as we refer to a University as 'the seat of learning.'"

Theoretically all higher education was free, but the story of Hillel, who was refused admission to the classroom, because he was unable to pay the janitor the admission fee, shows that in pre-Christian days payment of fees was customary. Even later, the school of Shammai were in favour of restricting the higher teaching of the Law "to men of wisdom, of modesty, of family, and of wealth." The school of Hillel, bearing in mind the harsh treatment which Hillel had experienced in his college days, said: "Let [the Law] be imparted to all men. There were many transgressors in Israel, who were encouraged to study the Law and became parents of righteous, holy and virtuous

* The Academy was sometimes called "Beth-Talmud" or "Beth-Ulphanah" "house of study" or of "instruction."

men" (*Aboth of Rabbi Nathan*, ch. ii.). No doubt, some Rabbis who had private means, taught without any remuneration. Others earned their livelihood by trade or handicraft and so were able to teach without requiring fees. Of course, pious Jews took great care that such Rabbis were free from financial anxieties. They were exempt from certain taxes. Devout men and women regarded it a meritorious act to supply their needs. "Rabbi Yohanan (probably 'John' who is mentioned in Acts iv. 6) said: 'Whosoever puts part of his income into the purse of a disciple of the wise, is counted worthy of a seat in the heavenly academy'" (*Pesahim* 53*b*). "Rabbi Yosé ben Haninah said: 'Whoever harbours a disciple of the wise in his house, is considered in Scripture as if he offers the daily sacrifice'" (*Berakhoth* 10*b*). "Let thy house be a place of resort to the wise men" (*Aboth of Rabbi Nathan*, ch. vi.).*

When our Lord sent out the Twelve on a missionary tour, the injunction He laid upon them was: "Freely ye received, freely give" (Matt. x. 8). The Apostles were forbidden to make a trade of their miraculous powers, but they were allowed to accept hospitality from those to whom they ministered, for "the labourer is worthy of his food" (v. 10).

4.—**The Method of Teaching.** Usually the teacher brought forward some problems dealing with moral, civil, or ceremonial Law; or with some question of history, exegesis, science, magic, folk-lore, or with some points of etiquette. He then proceeded to discourse on it, sup-

* The community of goods practised in the early Church (Acts. ii. 44 and 45), seems to have been of a somewhat similar nature. The believers voluntarily sold their possessions in order that they might provide the needs of the teachers and preachers of the Gospel, who devoted all their time to their missionary work and so were prevented from earning their livelihood.

porting his argument by some quotation from the Old Testament or appealing to the authority of earlier Rabbis. He could not speak with authority himself (*See* Matt. vii. 29 ; John vii. 46). His disciples were given complete freedom to ask questions, or to advance other explanations than those of their teacher (Luke ii. 46). If the attention of the audience began to flag, an experienced teacher would introduce " a merry ancedote, or a monstrous story, or would propound a ludicrous riddle, which immediately aroused the disciples and enabled him to go on with his theme."

Sometimes the teacher would ask a question, and the replies given by the disciples would provide the topic for discussion. A good example of this is found in the " Ethics of Jewish Fathers." Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai, asked his disciples : " What is the best thing for a man to possess ? " One answered, " a good eye " (*i.e.*, kind nature) ; another : " a good friend " ; another, " a good neighbour " ; another " a power to foresee consequences " ; Rabbi Eliezer said, " a good heart," whereupon Rabbi Yohanan remarked, " I prefer Rabbi Eliezer's answer to yours, for in it all your answers are included " (*Aboth* ii. 12).

5.—**Celestial Academy.** The study of the Law was considered of such paramount importance that the Rabbis taught that there was a celestial academy, in which the Almighty Himself spent three hours a day in the study of the Torah *i.e.* Law (*Abudah Zarah* 3*b*). We are actually told (*Baba Metsi-a* 86*a*) that at one time there was a divergence of opinion in this " exalted " academy regarding the interpretation of certain trifling details in the law of leprosy, and Raba bar Nahmani was summoned to heaven to decide between the Almighty and the members of His academy.

6.—The Education of Women was not encouraged,* though not altogether neglected, as appears from the 31st chapter of Proverbs, which gives us a pleasing description of a "virtuous" or capable woman. In the Talmud there are many references to *Beruriah*, the daughter of Rabbi Hananyah ben Teradyon, who was martyred during the Hadrianic persecution. Her husband was the celebrated Rabbi Meir, called "the light of the Law." Beruriah was deeply versed in Rabbinic lore and some of her legal decisions were endorsed by the Rabbis. Besides being learned, she was witty, tactful and kind-hearted. A very touching story is recorded of her in a Midrash,† which will bear repetition.

On a Sabbath day, Beruriah's two sons died suddenly when her husband was engaged in the academy. Not wishing to interrupt him in his sacred study, she waited until he came home in the evening. Evading a direct answer to his question about the children, she handed him the Habdalah cup, which is blessed and drunk to celebrate the conclusion of the Sabbath day. She had spread the table as on other Sabbaths, and when he had finished his meal, she asked permission to put to him a legal question. "Rabbi," she said, "some time ago a deposit was left with me for safe-keeping, and now the owner has come to claim it. Must I return it?" "Can there be any doubt about the return of a deposit to its owner?" said Rabbi Meir in astonishment. "I did not care to let it go out of my possession without your knowledge," replied Beruriah Then taking her husband by the hand, she led him to the room where the bodies of their two sons were lying. When

*"Rabbi Eliezer says: "Whoever teaches his daughter the Law, teaches her, as it were, silly things" (*Sotah* 20*a*).

† It is quoted in Yalqut Mishlé, 964.

the covering was removed, the sorrow-stricken father burst out into passionate weeping. Beruriah quietly reminded him of his answer to her question about the return of a treasure entrusted to one for safe-keeping, and quoted Job i. 21 : " The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away : blessed be the name of the Lord."

This pathetic story of Beruriah is a beautiful example of the kind of piety which would be found in some Jewish homes in the days of our Lord. For examples of similar piety in the New Testament, we instinctively turn to Mary and Martha of Bethany, to the holy women who ministered to our Lord, to the Virgin Mother, the prophetess Anna, and others.

It is interesting to know that Beruriah lived at Tiberias in Galilee.

CHAPTER VIII.

MARRIAGE IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES.

1.—**The "Rib."** The wonder of human love has engaged the attention of poets, novelists, scientists, philosophers and theologians of every age and every country. Why "doth a man leave his father and his mother, and cleave unto his wife?" Love, on the one hand, has been the inspirer of the noblest heroism, of the mightiest achievements and of the most supreme sacrifice. On the other hand, it has been responsible for the greatest crimes and for the most despicable deeds that have brought gloom and misery to the human soul. What is the secret of it all? The Book of Genesis, which from the religious point of view, offers solutions of some of the profoundest problems of the universe, gives a two-fold answer to this question. In the first place, it suggests that the relation between the sexes is a mystery, for "the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man and he slept." It was while man *slept* that the Creator produced the woman. The Divine operation has, therefore, been concealed from man's perceptions. Secondly, it tells us that however mysterious her creation may have been, woman is recognized by man as part and parcel of himself; bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh. In his observation of the animals, man had not come across any who was "help meet [*i.e.*, adapted, suitable] for him." "Many animals are serviceable to man, and so a 'help'; some may even become his companions, but none are [sic] on an equality with him. There are [sic] none with whom he can converse intelligently, or whom he

can treat as his intellectual or social equal" (*Driver*). In the woman alone he finds the suitable "help" to make him a complete man. "The dignity of human nature could not, in few words, be more beautifully expressed" (*Dillmann*).

"The Rabbis argue that man must seek after woman, and not a woman after a man . . . for man was formed from the ground—woman from man's rib; hence, in trying to find a wife man only looks after what he had lost!"*

"The woman is formed out of the man's side: hence it is the wife's natural duty to be at hand, ready at all times to be a 'help' to her husband; while it is the husband's natural duty ever to cherish and defend his wife, as part of his own self" (*Driver*).

2.—**A Woman's Wit.** "An idolator, quoting Genesis ii. 21, remarked to Rabban Gamaliel: 'Your God acted like a thief.' 'Let me answer him,' said Gamaliel's daughter. Addressing the idolator, she said: 'Give me a magistrate before whom I may plead a cause. Thieves came upon us by night, and robbing us of a silver jug, left us a golden one.' 'I wish,' replied the heathen, 'they would come to me every night.' 'And was it not good,' continued she, 'that instead of the rib taken from Adam, a hand-maid was given him to wait upon him'?" (*Sanhedrin* 39*b*).

3.—**Marriage is a religious Duty.** "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. i. 28), was regarded by the Rabbis as a positive command to marry and to rear up many children. "A Jew who has no wife is not a man" (*Yebamuth* 63*a*).

* "Edersheim's Sketches of Jewish Social Life," p. 146.

" From the age of twenty, if a man remain in a state of celibacy, he lives in constant transgression. Up to that age the Holy One, blessed be He ! waits for him to enter the state of matrimony, and curses his bones if he does not marry then " (*Qiddushin* 29*b*).

" At marriage all sins are forgiven " (*Yebamuth* 63*a*). Marriage was of such vital importance that the Rabbis had decreed : " It is permitted for one to sell a scroll of the Law if the money is needed for the purpose of getting married " (*Megillah* 27*a*). There was a special fund in each synagogue to provide the wherewithal for every poor Jew who wanted to get married. With much delicacy of feeling it was ordained that : " if male and female orphans claim charitable assistance to get married, the latter are first attended to ; because women are more sensitive to shame than men " (*Kethuboth* 67*a*).

4.—Marriage Customs among the Early Hebrews.

(*i.*) Choice of a Bride. Although young men and maidens mingled freely in ancient Israel, yet the choice of a suitable wife for the son was the recognised prerogative of the parents or the head of the family (Gen. xxiv. 3 ; xxi 21). The reason for this is not difficult to see. As the new bride had to become an integral member of the bride-groom's clan, her suitability or otherwise was the concern of the whole family. Of course, there was nothing to hinder considerate parents consulting the wishes of their children in this respect. Rebekah's consent, for instance, was asked whether she was willing to go and become the wife of Isaac. (Gen xxiv. 58). We read even of love-matches,

Michal, Saul's daughter, fell in love with David (1 Sam. xviii. 20 ; *cf.* Judges xiv. 1-3). To marry against the wish of the parents, however, was regarded with disfavour (Gen. xxvi. 34-35).

(*ii.*) Choice of a Bridegroom. In selecting a husband for their daughter, the parents would be guided by two considerations. First, that it was better for a girl to marry within the circle of her kindred.

Thus, Laban told Jacob, who was seeking the hand of his daughter Rachel ; " It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man " (Gen. xxix. 19). In the early days when the Hebrew clans kept themselves distinct, this precaution was of some importance. A daughter who married outside her own clan was thereby placed beyond the protective influence of her family. Moreover, such a match sometimes occasioned tribal complications in transferring, in the absence of a male heir, the real property of one clan to another. Human nature being pretty much the same in every age, we do not wonder if occasionally we find such considerations were not strictly observed.

In spite of the Law against intermarriage with aliens (Exod. xxxiv. 16 ; Deut. vii. 3), we find not only the rank and file, but also kings, princes, and members of the priestly family, forming marriage-alliances outside the Jewish community. David married the daughter of the King of Geshur (2 Sam. iii. 3) ; Solomon had Egyptian, Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Zidonian and Hittite wives

(1 Kings xi. 1); Ahab's despotic consort, Jezebel, was the "daughter of Eth-baal, King of the Zidonians" (1 Kings xvi. 31). There are also instances of Hebrew women marrying foreigners. Thus, Bath-sheba's husband, Uriah, was a Hittite (2 Sam. xi. 3). Hiram* (1 Kings vii. 14), that extraordinarily skilful artificer whom King Hiram sent to help Solomon in the building of the Temple, was "the son of a widow woman of the tribe of Naphtali,† and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass" (1 Kings vii. 13). For marriage-alliances of the priestly families with the neighbouring states see Ezra ch. ix.

(*iii.*) 'MOHAR' and 'MATTAN.'" The second item that claimed the attention of the bride's parents was the fact that in giving their daughter in marriage they were diminishing the efficiency of their own household. In the natural course of events, a daughter would attend to the flock of her father, or work in the field, or render help in some other way. On her marriage she would enhance the efficiency of her husband's family and reduce that of her own parents. So, a young man who aspired to the possession of their daughter must offer them adequate compensation.

The compensation thus offered was called in Hebrew *Mohar, i.e.*, "marriage gift," or dowry"

* This great artificer bears several names. He is called "Huram," evidently to distinguish him from Hiram the King. His full name seems to have been "Huram-abi," *i.e.*, "Huram is my father" (2 Chron. ii. 13). He is also called "Huram-abiv," *i.e.*, "Huram is his father" (2 Chron. iv. 16), "father" probably meaning "master craftsman."

† Her home must have been on the borders of Naphtali and Dan (2 Chron. ii. 13).

(Gen. xxxiv. 12), evidently a polite word for what in earlier days would have been called "purchase-price." It was not necessary to pay the "*Mohar*" in money; it could be paid in personal service, as in the case of Jacob, who, being unable to pay the customary "dowry" in cash, told Laban: "I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter" (Gen. xxix. 18). In the account of the negotiation for the hand of Rebekah for Isaac, we read that Eliezer gave betrothal gifts, not only to the bride elect, but also "to her brother, and to her mother precious things" (Gen. xxiv. 53). Such a gift is called *Mattan* in Hebrew.

It seems to have been customary for the parents or guardians of the girl to devote either the whole or part of the *Mohar* to the benefit of the bride. This was in addition to any parting gift she might receive from them. So, Rachel and Leah were justified when they complained of the stinginess of Laban, and declared: "he hath sold us, and hath also quite devoured the price paid for us" (Gen. xxxi. 15). Laban had taken full advantage of Jacob's fourteen years' service as the "*Mohar*" for Rachel and Leah, but had not assigned to the two brides any gift corresponding to Jacob's services.

Daughters of wealthy people often received handsome dowries from the parents. For example, Rebekah took with her to her new home not only her "nurse," but also her "damsels," *i.e.*, her attendants (Gen. xxiv. 59 and 61), and Caleb gave to his daughter a field with springs of water (Judges i. 15).

All the dowry or marriage portion that a bride took to her husband's home, remained her own personal property.

5.—**Polygamy and Divorce.** Among the Semites polygamy was allowed, although somewhat restricted in practice. Only kings, princes, and men of wealth, could indulge in the possession of more than one wife at a time. According to the **Code of Hammurabi,** normally a man could have only one legal wife at a time. There were, however, two exceptions to this rule. The *first* exception was as follows :*

> " If a man has married a wife and a sickness has seized her, and he has set his face to marry a second wife, he may marry her, but his wife whom the sickness has seized he shall not put away ; in the home she shall dwell, and as long as she lives he shall sustain her " (§ 148).

The *second* exception throws much light on the treatment of Hagar by Sarah. It reads :

> " If a man has espoused a votary and she has not granted him children, and he has set his face to take a concubine, that man shall take a concubine, he shall cause her to enter into his house. That concubine shall not put herself on an equality with the wife " (§ 145) To prevent such a contingency, the lawful wife might give her husband her own maid-servant, and if she brought up children, the husband was not allowed to take an additional wife (§ 144).

*These quotations are from Prof. C. H. W. John's translation of the Code in the Extra Vol. of Hasting's " Dictionary of the Bible " p. 603.

This was exactly what Sarah did. When she thought that there was no hope of her becoming the happy mother of children, she gave her own maid, Hagar, to Abraham as wife. In this she acted in full accord with the Code of Hammurabi. Her subsequent harsh treatment of Hagar also followed the same law which ordained that if such a maid, because she had borne children, made "herself equal with her mistress," the mistress was at liberty to "put a mark upon her" and reduce her again to the position of a maid-servant (§ 146 *cf.* Gen. xvi. 1-6).

Whether the Babylonians were more strict in the observance of their law-giver's ordinances than were the Hebrews in the keeping of the Mosaic Laws, is not very clear. In a contract of the age of Hammurabi, translated by Dr. Pinches, we read of a certain Arad-Samas, who married a sister of his first wife, and stipulated that the younger wife "shall be under the orders of her sister, shall prepare her food, carry her chair to the Temple of Marduk, and obey her in all things."*

6.—**Divorce among the Babylonians.** The husband alone had the power to dissolve the marriage bond. The words used on that occasion were: "Thou art not my wife." Only in case of cruelty, a wife could divorce her husband and "take her marriage portion and go off to her father's house" (§142). If a woman "has not been economical but a goer about, has wasted her house, has belittled her husband, one shall throw that woman into the waters" (§143). The husband, however, might marry another wife and degrade the first one to slavery (§141).

Among the ancient **Hebrews,** the ideal form of marriage was monogamy, the principle of which was laid

* See Sayce's Babylonians and Assyrians, p. 25.

down at the very birthday of human society (Gen. ii. 24). It is noteworthy that Lamech, the first transgressor of this primitive ordinance, became a boastful murderer (Gen. iv. 19 and 23). As far as we know, all the prophets were monogamous. Gideon, David, Solomon and some other wealthy Hebrews who indulged in polygamy, acted contrary to the original standard with disastrous consequences. In the days of Nehemiah, a number of Hebrews with a view to improving their social position, had divorced their Jewish wives and married non-Jewish women belonging to the influential families. Malachi appeared on the scene and in the name of Jehovah denounced such treacherous conduct, saying: "I hate putting away [*i.e.*, divorce], saith the Lord, the God of Israel" (Mal. ii. 16). With righteous indignation he adds that as the consequence of the heartless course of action of such miscreants "the altar of the Lord is covered with tears" of the grief-stricken divorced wives, "insomuch that He regardeth not the offering any more, neither receiveth it with good will at your hand. Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously, though she is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant" (Mal. ii. 13-14). Here we have the Old Testament ideal of married life.

CHAPTER IX.

MARRIAGE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT TIMES.

1.—**Celibacy.** With the exception of the small and insignificant sect of Essenes, who had introduced some un-Jewish practices into their order, and "neglected wedlock,"* the Jews regarded celibacy as the negation of Divine purpose (Isa. xlv. 18 : Gen. i. 28) and therefore sinful. "He who is without a wife is without joy, without blessing, without happiness, without learning, without protection, without peace ; indeed he is no man ; for it is written (Gen. v. 2), 'male and female created He them, and called their name man.'" (Yeb. 62*b* and 63*a*.) When a man is brought to judgment after his death, one of the questions put to him is : "Hast thou fulfilled the precept in Genesis i. 28 ?" (Sabbath 31*a*). In another Talmudic passage we are told : "Every Jew who is not married is, as it were, guilty of bloodshed, and deserves death : he causes the image of God to be diminished, and the Divine Presence to withdraw from Israel" (Yeb. 63*b* and 64*a*).

We know only of one Rabbi who remained unmarried, though he was betrothed to Rabbi Aqiba's daughter. His name was ben Azzai, and he lived about the middle of the second century of our era. He himself preached against celibacy. His friends twitted him for preaching what he did not practice. He replied : "What shall I do ? My soul has a longing for the study of the Law ; let others contribute to the preservation of the race" (ibid).

* "They do not absolutely deny the fitness of marriage, but they guard against the lascivious behaviour of women." Josephus, Jewish War, ii. 8, ¶2.

Fig. 2.

A. Opening for the Wick in the Lamp. C. Cruse of Oil.
B. Opening for the Oil. D. Ten Pieces of Silver with a Pendant.

Students, however, might, if they wished, withdraw from their wives for a period not longer than thirty days, in order that they might devote their whole time to the study of the Law. In the case of workmen, this abstention was not to extend beyond one week.* St. Paul allows a similar self-denial to the Christians in Corinth on three conditions : it must be by mutual consent, temporary, and for the object of prayer (1 Cor. vii. 5). Our Lord's reference to those who " made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake " (Matt. xix. 12), must not be understood literally, as Origen did and afterward repented. Our Lord is not putting any premium on celibacy, for in the preceding verses He confirms the Divine institution of marriage and its inviolability. He is referring to exceptional circumstances when a Christian, for a shorter or longer period, may sacrifice the joys of family life for the express purpose of furthering the work of the Kingdom of God, such as our missionaries have to do who go to unhealthy and dangerous mission fields.

2—**Were the Apostles Celibates ?** We know that St. Peter had a mother-in-law (Matt. viii. 15), and, at least some, if not all, of the other Apostles were likewise married, and their wives occasionally accompanied them in their missionary journeys. For this we have the testimony of St. Paul, who in 1 Cor. ix. 4-5, asks : " Have we no right to eat and drink at the expense of the Churches ? Have we no right to travel with a Christian wife,† like the rest of the Apostles, like the brothers of the Lord, like Cephas himself ? " (Moffatt's translation). " This passage would certainly

* Mishnah, Kethuboth, v. 6.

† R. V. Margin has " a wife that is a sister." " Sister "=a Christian woman, *i.e.* a believer.

lead us to suppose that most of the Apostles were married men."*

To the question whether St. Paul was a married man or not, scholars have given divergent answers. My own view is that he was a widower, for the following reasons :—

(*i.*) In his address before Festus and Agrippa (Acts xxvi. 10), he says : "When they [*i.e.* Christians] were put to death, I gave my *vote* against them." This implies that St. Paul was a member of the Sanhedrin. According to Mishnah†, no one was eligible for a seat in the Sanhedrin who had no children, because it was thought that he could not sympathise with the domestic affairs of the litigants.

(*ii.*) In 1 Cor. ix. 5, he asserts his right "to travel with a Christian wife," and to be maintained at the cost of the Church. It is, however, possible that he had lost his wife, and that he had refrained from marrying again because he was expecting the speedy return of the Lord.

This accounts for what he writes in 1 Cor. vii. 8 : "To the unmarried‡ and to widows I would say this : It is an excellent thing if like me they remain as they are. Still, if they cannot restrain themselves, let them marry." (1 Cor. vii. 8-9.)

* International Critical Commentary on 1 Cor. p. 181.

† Horayoth i. 4.

‡ "This includes bachelors, widowers and widows, but not unmarried girls, whose case is discussed later (25-38)" Int. Crit. Com. p. 138

(*iii.*) In 1 Tim. iii. 12, he writes : " Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife." By this he means that a Jew or a heathen who had more than one wife before embracing Christianity, was disqualified for any office in the Church.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews (xiii. 4) we read : " Let marriages be had in honour among all." This dictum expresses both the Jewish and the Christian ideal.

3.—**Marriage Customs in New Testament Times.** A number of new regulations had been introduced by the Rabbis in the marriage laws of the Old Testament. These require careful examination, if we are to get a clear apprehension of the New Testament references to marriage.

There were three stages in a properly conducted marriage, namely : (*a*) *Shiddu-khin* (engagement) ; (*b*) *Skiddu-khin* (betrothal), and (*c*) *Hup-pah* (marriage or wedding feast). We will explain these terms separately.

(*a*) **Shiddu-khin** was the preliminary negotiation leading to legal betrothal. It was usually arranged by the parents or their proxies. Sometimes, in European countries, the parents avail themselves of the services of a professional matchmaker, called *Shád-khán*, to find a suitable partner for their son or daughter. In the Palestinian Talmud* we read : " he that betroths a woman without preliminary engagement is punished with stripes, but the betrothal is valid."

* Qiddushin iii, 64b.

(*b*) **Qiddu-shin** (betrothal). The word "Qiddu-shin," means "sanctification," because by that ceremony the girl was "sanctified" or set apart for the sole society of her fiancé. From the moment the ceremony was performed, the couple had the status of husband and wife, and the bond could only be dissolved by divorce or by death. The marriage proper of a virgin took place twelve months after the betrothal. This was intended to give the girl time to provide herself with her outfit. The marriage of a widow could take place thirty days after the betrothal.* If the man who was betrothed to a virgin died, his fiancée would be called a "widow," although they had not yet been married. A man betrothed to a woman, but not yet married, was legally referred to as the "husband." We frequently read in the Mishnah of "a virgin who is a widow." (Kethuboth, i. 2, 4).

It is in complete accordance with this Jewish custom that the Virgin Mary is called the "wife" of Joseph (Matt. i. 20), and Joseph is called her "husband" (i. 19), although they were only "betrothed" and not yet married. The distinction between "betrothal" and marriage is recognised in St. Matt. i. 18.

A betrothal was valid if performed in one of the three following ways :

(*i*) By handing to a woman, either personally or by proxy, a small *coin* or its equivalent and

* Mishnah, Qiddushin, viii, 2

saying: "Be thou consecrated unto me by this, according to the law of Moses and Israel." If the girl was of age, that is, had completed her twelfth year, her consent was essential. If she was a minor, her father might betroth her.

(*ii*) By *Betrothal Contract**, which was drawn up by authorities and contained the mutual obligations, the marriage settlement, the dowry and other conditions.

(*iii*) By *co-habitation*. This, however, was regarded as disgraceful and the transgressor was punished with "stripes."†

In Judea, it was customary for the *bride's* father to provide a Betrothal Repast ‡ at his own expense and in his own house. The future bridegroom would be one of the party. After the meal, the bride and bridegroom were allowed to be in each other's company in a private room, so that they might get accustomed to each other's society. In Galilee, the engaged enjoyed much more freedom than those in Judea.

(*c*) **Hup-pah** (or Nis-su-in), marriage proper. The word húppah (also written chuppah) is found in Psalm xix. 6 (xix. 5 in English version), and is translated "chamber." It means the bridal chamber, and among modern Jews it is the name given to the "canopy" under which the bride and bridegroom are married. It means

* Called *Shitre Erussin*. Mishnah, Baba Bathra, x 4. "Erussin" means "betrothal" and is used as a synonymous term with "Qiddushin."

† Mishnah, Qiddushin, i, 1.

‡ Ibid. i, 5. This Betrothal Meal called *se-udath Erussin*, must not be confused with marriage festivities described further on.

also the marriage ceremony. The term *nis-su-in* means "taking" or conducting the bride to the bridegroom's home, hence, marriage proper.

Failure to distinguish between the *qiddushin* meal (which was of the nature of a family party and was provided by the bride's father) and the *huppah* festivity (which was a wedding banquet arranged in the house of the *bride* at the cost of the bridegroom), has been responsible for some fanciful and un-Jewish statements made by the commentators in their attempt to elucidate the parable of the Ten Virgins. We are, therefore, justified in discussing the details of the Wedding festivities somewhat more fully :—

(*i.*) **The Invitation.** The parents of the bride and bridegroom would make a list of all the people to be invited to the wedding. Armed with this list, two men, representing the two families, would go round delivering the invitation personally and by word of mouth. They would mention the day, on the evening of which the marriage festivities were to take place, but the *hour* would not be specified. On the appointed day, some guests might arrive fairly early in the evening; others, however, who entertained extravagant opinion of their own dignity, would not be in a hurry. They would wait until some one came to fetch them. So, it was necessary to send some one a *second* time to summon the invited guests telling them: "Behold, I have made ready my dinner (or "supper): my oxen and my fat cattle are killed, and all things are ready: come to the marriage feast" (Matt. xxii. 4).

Having accepted the invitation, if a man refused to attend, his refusal would be taken as a calculated insult to the person who invited him. No wonder, then, that in the parable of the Great Supper (Luke xiv. 16-24), the master of the house was "enraged" at the lame excuses that the invited guests offered for not attending. In the sister parable of the "Marriage of the King's Son" (Matt. xxii. 1-14), the King was so angry at the insult, that he inflicted condign punishment on the contemptuous defaulters.

At a great wedding banquet, both rich and poor, learned and unlearned, would be present. There might be even several who had come uninvited. Sometimes an ill-mannered guest, having arrived early, chose for himself the best seat in the banqueting hall. His behaviour would place the host in an awkward position, if a more distinguished guest arrived, for the host could not ask him to take a lower seat; as it would be an insult both to his person and to his learning.* The Pharisees, *e.g.*, expected the "best places at banquets and front seats in the synagogues" (Matt. xxiii. 6). So, the host would be obliged to ask the uncouth guest, who had occupied the chief seat, to "make room" for the distinguished scholar (Luke xiv. 7-9).

(*ii.*) **Preparation for the Wedding.**—Virgins were married on Wednesdays, and widows on Thursdays.† On the previous Tuesday, the virgin bride, accompanied by her female friends and relations, paid a visit to the public bath,‡ to

* "Jerusalem was destroyed," says Rabbi Yehudah, "for no other sin than that of holding the disciples of the wise in contempt" (Sabbath, 119b).

† Kethuboth i. 1.

‡ Ezek. xxiii. 40; Ephes. v. 26, 27.

undergo the first instalment of her adornment. She was first washed and anointed, then her hair, the palms of her hands, her nails and the soles of her feet were stained with henna ("Song of Songs," i. 14, R.V.). This was a laborious process and required two or three hours for its due performance. While the ladies were still in the bath house, a small procession, sometimes accompanied by musicians, carried on a tray the bridegroom's present for the bride. This consisted of articles of clothing, inwrought with gold or otherwise embroidered (Psalm xlv. 13, 14). With these and other ornaments, the bride-elect adorned herself (Isa. lxi. 10; Jer. xxi. 32), and returned to her father's house. In the evening an informal family party was provided by her father, at which the bridegroom was present. To this party the bridegroom's relations and the bride's friend brought their wedding gifts and presented them in person. About mid-night, the bridegroom, accompanied by his "friends," *i.e.*, best-men, returned to his father's house. On the following day (Wednesday), the second part of the bride's adornment was taken in hand. Either professional beauty specialists or some expert members of the family undertook this task. In the first place, they *painted her eyes* (Ezk. xxiii. 40), for as the Rabbis said: "A bride that has pretty eyes requires no further examination."* For this purpose a wooden bodkin was first

* Ta-anith, 24*a*.

dipped into some antimony (*Kohl*, in Arabic), then it was placed horizontally between the upper and the lower lashes of the eyes, and the eyes were closed. The bodkin being drawn out, the eye-lashes were darkened, and the eyes appeared larger (Jer. iv. 30, R.V.)* and with greater lustre. Then attention was paid to the *bride's hair* which, in the case of a virgin, was allowed to flow loose.† Afterwards she was attired in her beautiful *garments* and girdle (Jer. ii. 32), and decked with all sorts of silver and gold ornaments, chains, bracelets, rings, anklets, necklaces. The most highly prized ornament was a chain containing *ten pieces of silver* (Fig. 2 D, page 62) which, being a wedding gift from the bridegroom, was regarded as sacred and could not be taken for the husband's debt. This accounts for the diligent search made by the woman in the parable (Luke xv. 8), for the recovery of one of the lost pieces.‡ The adornment of the bride being now completed, she was perfumed (Psalm xlv. 8) and her head was covered with a veil (Gen. xxiv. 65). The veil was a square piece of silk or other material, large enough to cover the whole head and the upper part of the body, and sometimes reaching to the ankles. The veil worn by Ruth was a

* In 2 Kings ix. 30, the A.V. is wrong. It should be translated "painted her eyes," *not* "her face."

† Mishnah, Kethuboth ii. 10.

‡ The parable of the Lost Coin shows the sacredness and pricelessness of the human soul and the fact that "women also may work for the recovery of sinners." (Plummer).

wrap ample enough to hold six measures of barley (Ruth iii. 15). "The putting on of the veil marked the transition from girlhood to womanhood."* A virgin was married wearing a veil.† At the actual time when the couple pledged their troth the one to the other, the bridegroom removed the veil from the bride's head and threw it on his own shoulder, signifying thereby that he had taken upon himself the responsibility (the "government" Isa. ix. 6), as the head partner in the joint concern (cf. 1 Cor. xi. 3).

We have so far been describing how the bride was "adorned for her husband" (Rev. xxi. 2; Isa. lxi. 10). No doubt the bridegroom "rejoiced over the bride" (Isa. lxii. 5), when in the evening he was allowed to see her face. Meanwhile, the bridegroom was not neglected. On the Wednesday forenoon, accompanied by his friends, he went to the public bath. He washed himself and had the palms of his hands, the soles of his feet, and all his nails stained with henna. A small procession, preceded by some music, brought to him from the bride a present consisting of some wedding robes. After donning these, he returned home. Late in the afternoon, the bridegroom, with music and singing, was conducted by his relations and friends, to the house of the bride for the purpose of drawing up and signing the *Kethubah*, *i.e.*, marriage settlement (*Tobit* vii. 14), and being ready for the wedding feast in the evening.

(*iii.*) **The Wedding Feast** took place at night, in the house of the bride, but the expenses were

* Jewish Encyc. article "Veil."

† Mishnah, Kethuboth, ii. 1 and 10.

defrayed by the bridegroom. Hence, in the account of the marriage in Cana, the manager of the feast made his remarks about the " good wine " to the *bridegroom*, and not to the bride's father (John ii. 10). The male guests were entertained in a room where the bridegroom occupied the place of honour. The ladies were in another room with the bride. A sumptuous repast was provided for all the guests, while music, song and riddles enlivened the marriage feast. Sometime between ten and eleven o'clock, the two best men and a few relatives conducted the bridegroom to the room where the bride and her guests were being entertained. There, over a cup of wine, the seven Nuptial Benedictions were offered and the actual wedding took place. The bridegroom removed the veil off the face of his bride and threw it on his own shoulder. He then claimed his bride to take her to his own home. Upon this a procession was formed. Torches and lanterns were lit and the happy couple were conducted to their new home with songs, music and dancing.

(*iv.*) **The Wise and the Foolish Virgins.** The procession did not march to its destination the shortest way, but moved at a very slow pace through all the main streets of the town. This was necessary. In the first place it was regarded unbecoming for the bride and bridegroom to appear as though they were in a hurry. Secondly, as the streets were unlit at night, it was for the convenience of the guests to

accompany the illuminated procession until it reached somewhere near their homes, and then to depart. Thirdly, it gave an opportunity to the daughters of Israel to greet the joyous train and to show their respect for the newly married—a friendly action which, no doubt, would be reciprocated, when their turn came to be the happy brides in Israel. It was not an uncommon thing for the friends and well-wishers to improvise, on the route, seats for the bride and bridegroom, and refreshments for all. From the Mishnah* we gather that parched corn was distributed among the guests. Such friends would be honoured among the distinguished guests in the house of the bridegroom, during the seven days of the festivities that followed.

The Ten Virgins (Matt. xxv. 1-13), were not idle sightseers, but persons anxious to welcome the bridegroom, and escort him to his new home, and, in return, to be allowed the privilege of being among those friends who participated in the joyous festivities that continued for seven days† in the bridegroom's house. These young girls had left their homes and had assembled at some convenient place on the route of the bridal procession. They had taken with them their lighted lamps. These were necessary, first of all, for their own guidance in the dark, crooked and badly paved streets, and for the period of their waiting at their rendezvous. In the second place, they were intended to add to the brilliance of the bridegroom's

* Kethuboth, ii., 1. ; *cf.* Kethuboth 15*b* ; Berakhoth, 50*b*.

† Kethuboth, 7*a*.

entourage. These lamps were tiny cups (Fig. 2, p. 62). In the opening (A) was placed some flax or cotton-wool to serve as the wick. Through the circular opening (B) they poured some oil. The lamp when lighted, would burn about half-an-hour. Then the oil being exhausted, the wick would smoke and emit an unpleasant smell. In such a case, either the "smoking flax" is "quenched," *i.e.*, the light is extinguished, or the lamp is replenished. For this purpose a cruse of oil is always at hand. In addition to their lamps, the wise virgins had the forethought of taking with them an extra supply of oil in their vessels. Should the bridegroom's arrival for any reason be delayed, they would be prepared.

The foolish virgins, on the other hand, not anticipating delay, had not brought any more supply of oil than the quantity that was in their lamps. They lit their lamps, but made no provision for feeding them. "Now while the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept." Their sleep was natural and there was nothing culpable in it. They might feel the fresher for their rest, and better prepared to enter on the joy. When at midnight the cry was heard, "Behold, the bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet him," the prudent maidens were prepared; they arose and trimmed their lamps; but the foolish maidens became aware of their own lack of forethought. They said unto the wise: "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out." Alas! their request could not be granted. "Peradventure," replied the wise, "there will not be enough for us and you: go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." The reply is not selfish. "To have divided the oil would have entirely defeated the purpose of the procession" (Schaff). The advice to the foolish virgins to go and buy oil seems to us either foolish or mockery, or

else grossly light-hearted, seeing that at midnight all shops are closed and those that sell are in their beds.* But in reality it was nothing of the kind; it conveyed an oft neglected truth that "personal character cannot be given by one person to another; it must be *bought* by personal experience." The real folly of the foolish maidens consisted in this that at the very hour that the bridegroom was at hand they left the scene in vain quest of oil. The main ground of their exclusion from the bridal hall was not lack of oil, but *unreadiness*. "And while they went away to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were *ready* went in with him to the marriage festivities †; and the door was shut." Prof. A. B. Bruce is reasonable when he says: "Had these absent ones been present and gone on with their sisters, they would, for anything that appears to the contrary, have been admitted also."‡

(*v.*) **What the Foolish Lost.** In England, the newly married couple usually leave their home and go away for their honeymoon. In Palestine, the bride and bridegroom stay at home, receive their friends and enjoy a series of festivities, which generally last for seven days, and sometimes even for a fortnight. During this period, the bridegroom and his wife, wearing their

* All shops were closed at sun-set, *cf.*, Luke xi. 7.

† Not "marriage-feast," but "marriage-festivities." The Greek word used is *plural* and refers to the series of festivities that continued in the house of the bridegroom, after the actual marriage feast, for 7 to 14 days. The marriage feast had actually taken place in the house of the *bride* before the bridal procession (see Tobit viii. 19). The marriage feast

(*i*) was never held at midnight;
(*ii*) no lights were needed for admission, and
(*iii*) the doors were never shut.

‡ The Parabolic Teaching of Christ, p. 502

marriage garments and ornaments, play the part of a king and queen, and are served and honoured as such by all.* They are garlanded and enthroned. They hold a festal court called *Diwan*, and issue commands. The friend of the bridegroom (*i.e.*, his best man), "standeth and heareth him (and) rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice" (John. iii. 29). Had the foolish virgins been "ready" to accompany the bridegroom, they would have formed part of this privileged and rejoicing company. They would have had many happy days in the society of the bridegroom, would have heard his voice and rejoiced greatly. But their "scrupulous regard to ceremony," their undue attachment to formality, made them more concerned about the oil than the presence of the bridegroom.

How tragic the consequence! "And the door was shut." This was necessary for keeping out intruders and for the security of those within. There are many "foolish" Christians in every age. They are not "lost," but they miss the fulness of joy and blessing that the risen and ascended Lord wishes them to have. Some have just enough religious feeling for a normal and uneventful mode of life, but their spiritual life is not deep enough for an abnormal, unexpected crisis. "It is in moments of surprise that a man's true self comes out to view."† Neither have they any extra supply of light to "shine before men."

* For an interesting description see "The Song of Solomon," by Principal Harper, in Camb. Bible for Schools and Colleges, (Appendix ii).

† Archbishop Trench on "The Parables."

Their Christian profession does not add any lustre to the presence of their Lord. Others, are like the lamp whose oil is well-nigh exhausted and in consequence is emitting unpleasant smoke. They are disagreeable, captious and so unfit " to help on others in their dark and doubtful way through this life."* Others, again, in the Master's service, are unready. There are clear manifestations of the Spirit of Christ in the " mass movements " among many races, and yet professing Christians are not prepared to take advantage of it, until it will be too late and they discover that the door is shut.

(*vi.*) **The Friends of the Bridegroom and the Children of the Bridechamber.** " The friend of the bridegroom " (Jn. iii. 29), in the Talmud is called *Shoshebin*, and is distinguished from " the children of the bridechamber," who are called *bene huppah*.†

The latter expression simply means the guests at a wedding-party, but especially those honoured guests who participated in the seven days' marriage festivities in the presence of the bridegroom. In a scene of great rejoicing and feasting, mourning or fasting would be out of place. (Matt. ix. 15 ; Mark ii. 19). The " friend of the bridegroom," was what we may call the best man or the groomsman. His duties, however, were more onerous than a present day " best man." " In Judæa there were at every marriage *two* groomsmen or friends of the bridegroom—one for the bridegroom, the other for his bride. Before marriage, they acted as a kind of intermediaries between

* Marcus Dods, " The Parables of our Lord."

† Sukkah 25b, cf. Palestinian Talmud, Sukkah, 53a.

the couple ; at the wedding they offered gifts, waited upon the bride and bridegroom, and attended them to the bridal chamber, being also, as it were, the guarantors of the bride's virgin chastity."*

It is this simile of groomsman that St. Paul is using in 2 Cor. xi. 2. He had acted as a *shoshbin* in betrothing the Corinthian Christians to Christ. He is now inspired with a Divine zeal to complete his duty in seeing that the " bride " remains chaste in order that she may be presented to the " Bridegroom " at His appearing.

In the Talmud,† we read that in Galilee "friends of bridegroom " were not employed. It is in complete accordance with this that in the report of the marriage in Cana of Galilee, no mention is made of any friend of the bridegroom. In John iii. 29, the " friend of the bridegroom " is used because the scene is laid in Judea (John iii. 22).

(*vii.*) **Polygamy and Dissolution of Marriage.** Owing to the silent inroad that Hellenism had made in the citadel of Rabbinism, the lofty ideal of marriage which had been sanctioned in Genesis ii. 24, and pathetically defended by Malachi ii. 16, had been much lowered in the century before the birth of Christ. The rich indulged in polygamy without the slighest censure. Herod the Great had nine wives (Josephus, Antiq. xvii 1.3) ; his two sons, Archelaus and Antipas, had each two wives (ibid. xvii. 13, 2). Josephus tells us that " the Jews of those days

* Edersheim's Sketches of Jewish Social Life, p. 153.

† Kethuboth 12a.

adhered to their ancient practice to have many wives at the same time."* Dr. Israel Abraham says: "though monogamy had become the prevalent custom in Jewish life long before the Christian era, the man could legally marry several wives, and sometimes did so." †

The law of Divorce was very lax. A man could send away his wife on the flimsiest ground. Her assent was not necessary. "A woman may be divorced with or without her will, but a man only with his will" (*Yebamoth* xiv. 1). In the rival schools of Hillel and Shammai, the correct interpretation of Deuteronomy xxi. 1, was a bone of contention. "The school of Shammai say: A man may not divorce his wife, except he found in her an unseemly thing (*i.e.*, unchastity)." The School of Hillel say, "he may divorce her, even if she has burned his food." Rabbi Aqiba says: "he may divorce her even if he has found a prettier woman."‡ Some Jewish scholars, indeed, would interpret Hillel's dictum metaphorically, and take it to mean indecent conduct. This is extremely doubtful. At any rate, Aqiba's statement can only be taken literally. As Aqiba was a vehement opponent of Christianity, it is quite possible that his extreme licence in the matter of divorce was intended to mark his disapproval of the teaching of Christ. The Pharisee's question: "Is it lawful (for a man) to put away his wife for every cause?" was a question which was being hotly discussed in the Rabbinic academies of the time. Our Lord in His answer points to the original institution of marriage, which made no provision for divorce,

* Antiq. xvii. 1, 2.

† "Studies in Pharisaism," First Series, p. 73.

‡ Gittin ix. 10.

but ordained that "the twain shall become one flesh." He adds, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." (Matt. xix. 3-9). The permission to divorce in Deuteronomy was a concession by Moses owing to the low condition of society in his time; but now men ought to go back to the original institution of marriage which was intended to be indissoluble, saving for the cause of unchastity (Matt. xix. 9; v. 32).

According to the later teaching of the Rabbis, a woman could be divorced with the loss of her dowry, if she went about with her head uncovered, if she flirted with any man, or if she was a noisy woman.* As the grounds of the dissolution of marriage were not necessarily moral, no moral stigma was attached to a divorce. In earlier days, it was not necessary that a divorce case should come before the Court. A man could have a bill of divorcement written and signed in presence of two witnesses and sent to her. If a man wanted to break a marriage engagement (*qiddushin*), he had to give his fiancée a "bill of divorcement," for without it she could not marry anybody else.

The wife could claim a divorce from her husband, if he fell a victim to leprosy or any other loathsome disease, if he was engaged in an unsavoury occupation, if he was openly licentious in his life, if he discarded Judaism, if he persistently ill-treated her or denied her conjugal rights.† Since the 11th century of our era, by a decree of Rabbi Gershon of Mayence, monogamy has been the rule among the European Jews.

It may be stated that in spite of all the legal laxity in matrimonial affairs, the home-life of the Jews was pure

* Mishnah, Kethuboth vii. 6.

See also Dr. Israel Abraham's "Studies in Pharisaism," first series, chap. ix.

† Mishnah, Kethuboth vii. 9, 10.

and happy. As St. Paul bears witness, the Jews of his day had a great zeal for God, though not according to knowledge (Rom. x. 2). The following saying from the Babylonian Talmud represents the nobler side of the teaching of the Rabbis,* "Our masters have taught; he who loves his wife as himself, and honours her more than himself; who leads his sons and daughters in the straight path, and marries them near their time of maturity; to his house the words of Job (v. 24) apply."

(*viii.*) **A Married Woman's Duties.** "These are the offices which a woman must perform for her husband: she must grind corn, bake, wash, cook, suckle her child, make his bed, and work in wool. If she has brought him one bondswoman (as her dowry), she is exempt from grinding, baking and washing; if she has brought him two bondswomen, she is exempt from cooking and suckling her child; if three, she need not make his bed or work in wool; if four, she may lounge in her arm-chair. Rabbi Eleazer says: 'Even though she has brought him a hundred bondswomen, she must work in wool, for idleness leads to infidelity.'"†

(*ix.*) **A witty peace-making Rabbi.** "A man once said to his wife: I vow to keep away from thee until thou showest to Rabbi Ishmael, the son of Rabbi Yosé, one good feature in your body. Rabbi Ishmael asked the husband: Is not her head well shaped? No, it is flat. Is not her

* Yebamoth, 62*b*, at the end.

† Mishnah, Kethuboth, v. 5.

hair beautiful? No, it is like uncombed flax. What about her eyes? They are squinting. Her ears? They are long. Her nose? Is disfigured. Her lips? Are thick. Her neck? She has hardly any. Her feet? They are as flat as those of a goose. Perhaps, said the Rabbi, her name is pretty. Her name is Lakh-lu-khith (which means 'soiled'). Well, said the Rabbi, her name at any rate is the mos suitable, as she is soiled all over with defects, and so there is one good feature in her." *Nedarim*, 66*b*.)

CHAPTER X.

DEATH AND BURIAL.

1.—**The Doctrine of Immortality in the Old Testament.** The revelation of the doctrine of immortality was gradual and progressive in the Old Testament. The "tree of life" in the Garden of Eden, the translation of Enoch and of Elijah without passing through the gate of death, the narrative of the appearing of Samuel, after his death, to Saul at Endor (1 Sam. xxviii. 14), and the phrase "gathered unto his fathers," used to signify death, spoke to the thoughtful Hebrews of a life beyond the grave. So long as the *nation* was the religious unit, the bulk of the people do not seem to have devoted much thought to their own *individual* destiny after death. They enjoyed the care and the love of God in this life, and so could trust Him for their future. They were content with the assurance, that: "secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." (Deut. xxix. 29). We must not assume that there were not Israelites, or groups of Israelites, who longed for clearer light on the destiny of their individual souls. It was, however, in the vicissitudes of the Hebrew history and in the inner experiences of the prophets and saints that the Divine Spirit, ever striving to express Himself, revealed the truth of a life beyond the grave, of a life with God.

Let us give here a few confident expressions of this truth :

" I have set the Lord before me continually,
Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth :
My flesh also shall dwell in security.
For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol,
Thou wilt not suffer Thy godly one to see corruption.
Thou makest me to know the path of life ;
In Thy presence is fulness of joys ;
In Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore " (Psalm xvi. 8-11).

Again, the Psalmist, comparing death to sleep, says :

" But as for me, may I behold Thy face in righteousness ;
May I be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness " (Psalm xvii. 15).

For other confident expressions of faith in a blessed life with God, see Psalm xlix. 15 ; lxxiii. 21-26 ;* Isa. xxv. 7-8 ; xxvi. 19 ; Job. xix. 25-26 ; Dan. xii. 2.

2.—**Causes of Death.** There were several theories as to the cause of death.

The son of Sirach says :

" From a woman was the beginning of sin ;
And because of her we all die." (Ecclcus. xxv. 24).

* Students may consult with advantage Prof. Burney's essay on " Immortality among the Jews," in the volume of four essays entitled " The Jews at the close of the Bible age."

The author of the Wisdom of Solomon (ii. 23-24) : says :

> " God created man for incorruption,
> And made him an image of His own proper being ;
> But by the envy of the devil death entered into the world."

Compare Rom. v. 12 ; 1 Cor. xv. 21.

Some Rabbis ascribed the cause of death to Adam's sin (Tanna debe Eliyahu—R.5), others to each man's personal sin.

3.—**Tasting of Death.** The Talmud avers that there are 903* kinds of deaths in the world. The hardest of all is by croup : it is like the violent extraction of a thorn from the wool of skins. The easiest of all is by a Divine Kiss : " it is like the drawing out of a hair from milk " (Berakhoth, 8*a*). Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron and Miriam passed this life by a Divine Kiss. The immediate cause of the death of the ordinary people is described, in Abodah-Zarah, 20*b*, as follows :—

> " The angel of death is full of eyes, and when a man is on the point of dissolution, he takes up a position above his head with his sword stretched out, and a drop of gall suspended on it. As soon as the dying man sees the angel of death, he is seized with convulsion and opens his mouth, whereupon the angel drops the gall."

So the death of a person is due to his " seeing " the angel of death and " tasting " of the gall. The New Testament expressions " see death " (John viii. 51; Luke ii. 26) and " taste of death " (John viii. 52 ; Mark ix. 1 ; Luke

* Kethuboth iv. 4 (end).

ix. 27), are thoroughly Jewish and had their origin in this Rabbinic conception of the cause of death.*

4.—Professional Mourners. Mourning over the death of a good man was a religious duty, as the following quotations will show :—

"Whosoever is remiss in mourning over the death of a wise man, deserves to be burned alive." (Sabbath 105*b*.)

"The tears dropped over the death of a virtuous man are counted by the Holy One, blessed be He ! and laid by in His treasuries" (Psalm lvi. 8), ibid.

"Children die young because their fathers have not mourned over the death of a virtuous man." (Moed-qaton, 25*a*). As far back as the days of the prophet Amos, professional mourners were employed to induce men to tears (Amos v. 16). In Jeremiah ix. 17, they are called "mourning women" and "cunning women," whose duty was "to take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters." We read in the Mishnah† : "even the poorest man in Israel should not have less than two flute players and one mourning woman (at his wife's funeral)." At the death of the daughter of Jairus, our Lord saw in the ruler's house "minstrels (or "flute-players") and the people making a

* The dying soul, immediately before quitting the body, has a vision of the Shekhinah (Pirqé Rabbi Eli-ezer. xxxiv. cf. Stephen's vision of the glory of God (Acts vii. 54-56).

† Kethuboth iv. 4 (end).

tumult (*i.e.* professional mourners)," and He sent them out of the house because their services were no longer required. They were hypocrites and wailed not because they were grieved, but because they were paid for it (Matt. ix. 23 ; Mark v. 38). We read sometimes of *men* mourners, snatches of whose funeral orations are preserved in the Talmud. On the death of Rabbina, Bar-Abin said : " Weep for the mourners, and not for the deceased ; for he is gone to rest, but we are left in anguish." (Moed-qaton, 25*b*).

It was a pious act to shed tears while the virtues of the pious dead were being declaimed. Compare Acts xi. 39.

5.—**Preparation for the Burial.** Owing to the hot climate, rapid interment was necessary. Immediately after death, the corpse was kissed (Gen. l. 1), and his eyes were closed (Gen. xlvi. 5), and, according to the Mishnah,* the jaws were tied " to prevent them dropping lower." The body was washed (*cf.* Acts ix. 37) and anointed with sweet-smelling ointment (Jn. xii. 3 and 7), and wrapped in a clean linen cloth (Matt. xxvii. 59), the hands and feet were bound with grave-clothes† and the head was covered with a napkin (John xi. 44), and the body was buried the same day. In preparing the body of our Lord for interment, Nicodemus, being a rich man,§ brought " a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound (weight)." " Myrrh " was an odoriferous gum, and " aloes,"

* Sabbath, xxiii. 5.

† or " grave-bands," called in Hebrew *Takhrikhin* (Jn. xix 20).

§ In the Talmud, Taanith, 19*b*, Nicodemus is mentioned as a very rich and generous man.

a fragrant wood. These, pounded and mixed, would produce a pleasant and pungent perfume. Some of this powder would be used in the folds of the linen-cloths and the remainder would cover the sacred Body.

With such lavish generosity, Nicodemus wanted to give the Divine Teacher a royal burial, like the burial of King Asa, of whom we read: "And they buried him in his own sepulchres, which he had hewn out for himself, in the City of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries' art" (2 Chron. xvi. 14).

According to Josephus, valuable objects were sometimes placed in the grave with the body. At the burial of his son Aristobulus, Herod provided "a great quantity of spices and buried many ornaments together with him." (Antiq. xv. iii. 4).

"Hyrcanus opened the sepulchre of David . . . and took out of it three thousand talents of silver" (ibid. xiii., 8. 4). Herod also opened the sepulchre of David and secretly removed from it "many ornaments of gold and precious goods" (xvi., vii. 1).

Owing to the heavy funeral expenses, the corpse was sometimes abandoned by the impecunious relatives. To remedy this, Rabban Gamaliel II. (end of the 1st and beginning of the 2nd century), ordered that he himself should be buried in a simple linen shroud. This is now the custom among the Jews.

The body was conveyed to the burying-place not on a coffin* but on a bier, covered with a pall. When our

* The bones of Joseph were placed in a "coffin" in conformity with the Egyptian custom (Gen. l. 26).

Lord raised to life the widow's son at Nain, the corpse was being carried in a *bier*, and so there was no lid to be removed before the young man could sit up (Luke vii. 11-17).

6.—**Rock-hewn Tomb.** The normal mode of disposing of the dead was by *burial*. The ancient Hebrews had an aversion to burning the body. They had recourse to it only in the case of certain criminals, whose bodies were burned *after* execution. The *cremation* of the bodies of Saul and his sons by the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead was an exception and was intended to prevent them from falling again into the hands of the Philistines (1 Sam. xxxi. 8-13).

Embalming proper was a purely Egyptian practice. Jacob (Gen. l. 2), and Joseph (Gen. l. 26) were embalmed in accordance with the Egyptian custom.

With the exception of the very poor (Jer. xxvi. 23), each family had its own burying-place. Well-to-do people had rock-hewn tombs (Matt. xxvii. 60). These were either natural caves adapted for the purpose, or chambers hewn in the rock. There were also masonry tombs. On each side of the tomb there were one or more niches or recesses into which the body was placed. These recesses were closed with a stone slab.

Sometimes there were two or three chambers communicating with each other by means of a narrow rock-cut passage. The entrance to the tomb was closed by a large stone in the shape of a circular millstone. It moved in a groove cut before the opening. It was less difficult to roll it down to the entrance, than to roll it away. It would require several men, working together, to move it.

Fig. 3.
Rock Hewn Tomb.
A. Entrance into the Tomb. B. Rolling Stone.

Fig. 4.
The Interior.
A.A.A. The niches or recesses on which the body was placed.

7.—The Tomb in which Christ's Body was placed. Joseph of Arimathæa, being a rich man (Isa. liii. 9), had made for himself in his life time, " a *new* tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock." In this *new* tomb he placed the sacred body of the Lord and " rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed " (Matt. xxvii 59). The fact that the tomb was *new* is mentioned by St. Matthew. St. Luke adds : " where never man had yet lain " (xxiii. 53).

This is of great evidential value, showing that the body which was raised was the *same* body that was placed in the sepulchre. There was no other body to be mistaken for the Lord's body.

The admission into the sepulchre would be by an opening about four feet high, and a man of an average height would have to " stoop " down to enter it (Luke xxiv. 12 ; John xx. 5).

Mary Magdalene and the other devoted women—" Last at His cross and earliest at His grave "—were justified in asking on that first Easter morning, " who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the tomb ? " seeing that the stone was " exceeding great " (Mark xvi. 3-4).

When Peter entered the tomb, " he beholdeth the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, that was upon His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself." All these details are precious, and we must not overlook their evidential value. The late Dr. H. R. Reynolds puts it admirably when he remarks : " It is clear, then, that the body had not been carried away tor another burial, nor had it been hastily removed, seeing that there were signs of deliberation, choice and care."*

* Pulpit Commentary on St. John, Vol. II., p. 465.

8.—**After Death.** " For three days the spirit hovers about the tomb, if perchance it may return to the body. But when it sees the fashion of the countenance changed, it retires and abandons the body."*

> " The dead feel the sting of the worms as the living do the prick of the needle " (Sabbath 152*b*).
>
> " The disembodied spirits converse with each other " (Berakhoth 18*b*).
>
> " It is taught by tradition, that for twelve months after death, the body is preserved, and the soul ascends to, and descends from, the Throne of Glory ; after that period the body is destroyed, and the soul ascends, but descends no more " (Sabbath, 152*b*).

9.—**Life " hid with Christ in God "** (Col. iii. 3). This saying of St. Paul becomes clear when we know the Jewish belief about the after-life. Rabbi Eleazer says : " The souls of the righteous are hidden beneath God's glorious Throne " (Sabbath, 152*b*).

When the angel of death came to take the soul of Moses, we are told† that Moses rebuked him. Then " God took the soul of Moses, and hid it under His Throne of Glory."

St. Paul tells the Colossian Christians that at their conversion and baptism, they became united with the Risen Christ. So they have a heavenly life to live. Your new spiritual life has its source in the exalted Christ. " Set your minds on the things that are above, not on the things

* Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. I., p. 802. This quotation is given as a saying of Ben Kaphra.

† Aboth of Rabbi Nathan, chap. 12.

that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

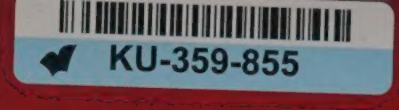
10.—**On the Threshold of Eternity.** With the exception of the aristocratic Sadducees, the Jews of the time of our Lord believed in a future life. Many of them suffered martyrdom in the hope of eternal bliss. Trusting, however, in their own good deeds and the performance of an endless number of rites and ceremonies, their hope often failed them at the critical moment. The death-bed story of Yohanan-ben-Zakkai ("John" mentioned in Acts iv. 6), will illustrate this:

> "When Rabbi Yohanan-ben-Zakkai was sick, his disciples came to visit him. On seeing them, he began to weep. They said: 'Light of Israel! right pillar (1 Kings vii. 21) and mighty hammer! why weepest thou?' He replied: 'Would I not weep if I were brought before a King of flesh and blood, who is to-day here, and to-morrow in his grave, whose anger with me, and the bonds and death which he might inflict upon me, could not last for ever, whom I might appease with words, or conciliate with a bribe? How much more cause to weep have I now, that I am being brought before the Supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He! Who lives and abides for ages and ages of ages, Whose anger with me, and the bonds and death which He may inflict upon me, will last for ever, Whom I cannot appease with words, nor conciliate with a bribe! More than this: here are two ways before me, one leading to Paradise, and the other

to Gehenna, and I know not in which I am led, and shall I not weep?" (Berakhoth, 28*b*).

This Yohanan was a contemporary of our Lord, and filled the office of the Patriarch. A student of the New Testament cannot help contrasting this gloom and terror of the Rabbi with the confident exultation of St. Paul, who, when standing on the threshold of eternity, wrote: "I know Him Whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 Tim. i. 11).

By the above story, however, I do not wish to give the impression that *all* the Jews have had terror of death like Rabbi Yohanan. Thank God, there has been in every age, many pious Israelites, who, in their "zeal for God" (Rom. x. 2), have endured untold suffering and death with resignation. The story of Yohanan, nevertheless, illustrates admirably St. Paul's words that "by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. ii. 16).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